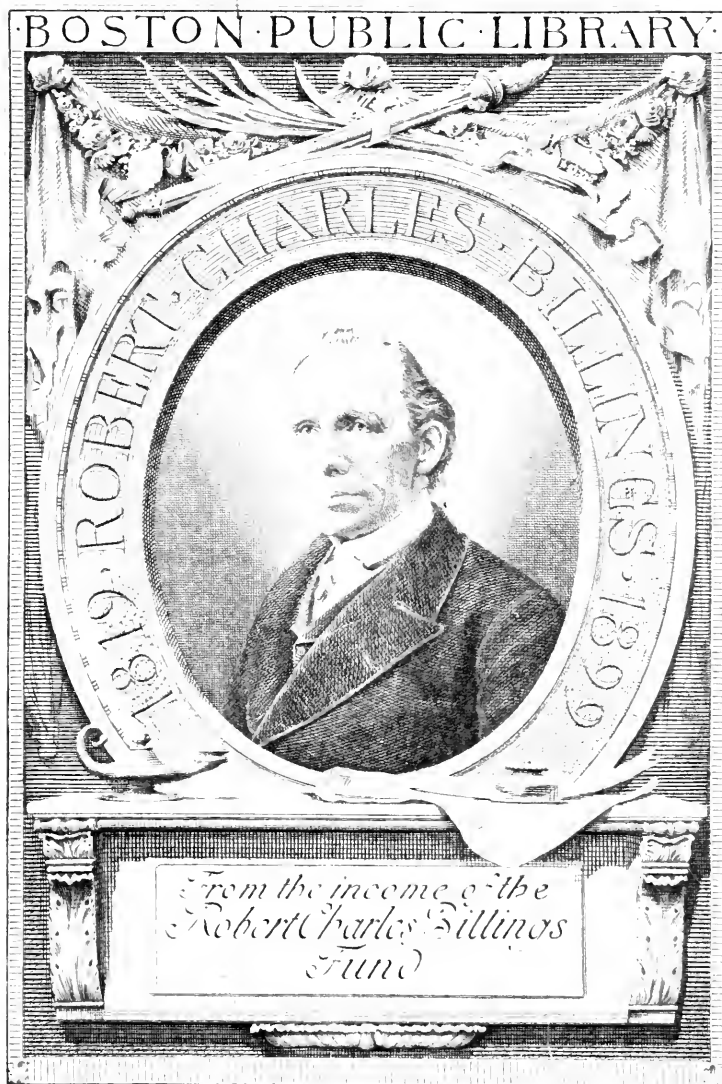


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BY
BERNIE ST
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HOME COOKERY IN WAR-TIME

HOME COOKERY IN WAR-TIME

By ERNEST OLDMEADOW

THE
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OF
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AND
MANUSCRIPTS
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INTRODUCTION

A CHARMING lady, who is also a good cook and a clear writer, had promised to write for the publisher of this volume a little manual of Home Cookery in War-time. The Red Cross called her away before the first page was written ; and I am bidden to step into the breach. For a man who is one year too old to join anything more important than a Home Defence corps, it is some consolation to try and serve his countrymen in another way. *Cuisine c'est médecine*, said Michelet; and good cookery is a cure for the mind's as well as the body's ills, besides being cheaper in the end.

I must explain at the outset the class of readers which will be addressed throughout the following chapters. It is silly to go angling in waters where no fish has ever been known to bite ; and I shall therefore exclude from consideration the cooks in luxurious households. Speaking broadly, the servants in great houses are the last to respond when an appeal for thrift and frugality is made. Even during sieges and famines, waste goes on in rich kitchens. I admit gladly that there are magnificent exceptions ; but the sad truth remains that the servants of the wealthy are generally selfish parasites and that it would be a waste of breath to preach economy to them so long as opportunities for extravagance exist. Happily, many

heads of families are turning off the pampered and strapping footmen who ought to be bearing arms, and are attempting to reform their establishments on lines which will give employment where it is most needed. But thousands of wasteful cooks will go on in the old way; and I shall not lose time on suggestions for economy in the sphere which they inhabit.

With reluctance and regret, I must pass by the humblest households also. There could be no more useful or patriotic work than to knead better ideals and sounder practices of cookery into the hearts and minds of the working classes. Up to the present, however, the task has been hardly begun. We know that well-meaning philanthropists and social doctrinaires have laboured long and unselfishly to this end, but **their** industry and zeal have made little impression. It is not enough to ascertain the quantities and proportions of proteids, and carbohydrates and fats and salts required every day by a laundress, or a navvy, or a stoker, or a nursing mother, and to prescribe the cheapest dietary in which these quantities and proportions would be found. The wealthier classes do not conduct their cooking and their eating on such principles; and their humbler brothers and sisters are still more stoutly resolved not to do so. We shall not raise the standard of cookery among the poor until we have informed ourselves more correctly about the poor man's palate and about the attitude of the poor man's wife to processes which require more elbow-room and more detachment of purpose than nine out of ten poor women actually command. Let nobody imagine that I am writing without sympathy for those who toil hard with **their** hands. But

it is necessary to be practical and to recognise the futility of addressing men and women who will not read this book and would regard it almost as a document in a foreign language if it were forced upon them.

I shall assume my audience to consist of those who are cursed neither by poverty nor by riches. So far as Home Cookery is concerned, the most receptive men and women are such as cultivate a wide variety of experiences on the strength of moderate incomes. I am thinking of the scores of thousands who are the salt of England ; the people who, without forgetting to help the poor and to provide for the future, seem to get the most out of life ; who bring a wholesome curiosity into play and are always picking up lore worth having ; who spend their bits of money intelligently on every occasion, whether it be the choice of a book or the planning of a holiday or anything else through which the old grooves have been worn too well. In writing this book, I have kept in mind the ladies of slender means who maintain a certain dignity of housekeeping on resources which would barely pay for a stockbroker's cigars. I am thinking of the generous hostesses who keep open house so pleasantly for the benefit of all sorts of unhomely visitors, although their own means are small. I am thinking too of mothers who, with many mouths to feed, are none the less determined to keep the flag flying and never to subside into slovenliness in the kitchen or at table. Nor do I forget the young wives whose fitful resolves towards old-fashioned domestic efficiency are so little encouraged under modern conditions. Last of all, I remember the many men who more or less clearly perceive that cookery is an honourable art,

with nothing effeminate about it. Although "the gentlemen" in mid-Victorian times usually looked down upon a man who could cook, many of the deepest scholars and strongest men of action in history have been keen on cooking. This is mainly a book for women ; but men may learn from it how to be less helpless. In short, it gives advice to all those who take a direct part in the operations of their kitchens. Some of my readers may have a dozen servants, and others may have no more than a woman or young girl who comes in for a few hours to do the rougher work. I take it for granted, however, that they are all alike in wielding, or wishing to wield, supreme power in their own kitchens and larders ; and that they are not above the preparing of a dish from start to finish.

Unfriendly critics may plausibly say of this manual that it is disorderly ; that it abounds in repetitions ; and that some matters are discussed at length while others equally important are hardly mentioned. The answer is that I have not tried to write anything like a systematic and complete cookery-book. Indeed I assume throughout that every reader possesses one of the regular cookery-books and knows how to use it. I have aimed rather at sending housekeepers back to their cookery-books with a new zeal for tasks in which they may have grown stale. While the following pages contain at least a hundred practical recipes, they are mainly devoted to stating and illustrating the great facts and principles from which all worthy recipes have been evolved. The woman or man who

peruses and applies the advice given between these covers is certain to go on studying with the aid of other and larger works. As for the omission of many dishes which were entitled to be described, I can only say that my choice has been guided by experience. Some dishes are already so well known in English kitchens that there was no need to discuss them ; others are natural and obvious variations upon the recipes I have given ; and a third large group comprises dishes which rarely give satisfaction, although their names sound well and the directions look promising on paper. Again, many familiar *plats* are expensive or troublesome out of proportion to their merits ; or they are not wholesome ; or they are the seductive enemies of a palate in course of education. Most of my omissions fall under these heads. As for the others, they are to be explained by my carelessness or ignorance. But the design of the book will become apparent only to those who will read it through, repetitions and all. They can turn back to particular recipes as occasions arise.

If I have said little that is explicit on Invalid Cookery, it is partly because I do not presume to compete with the writers who have specialised in such work. There is, however, another reason. Careful observations, made during an illness of my own and many illnesses of my friends, convince me that the best cookery for invalids is simply—the best ordinary cookery. With an intelligent doctor to hoist the danger signals, a sick man comes through his sickness the more quickly if we are not perpetually

reminding him, by a special diet, that he is ill. This does not apply to certain grave cases : but I fear that Invalid Cookery has not always helped the doctor and the nurse. When an intelligent cook grasps the nature of a patient's malady and remembers that he is lying warm, without exercise or hard work, it should be easy to back up the medicine by means of a plain or scanty but varied and attractive diet.

E. O.

FEAST OF ST DENIS OF FRANCE, 1914.

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CHAPTER I

THE ROOTS OF THE MATTER

HARDLY had the Belgian and German guns at Liège begun their awful dialogue before England was loud with voices telling the non-combatant how to comport himself in war-time.

The advertising agents instantly primed the shopkeepers with the cry: "**Live as usual: Spend as usual: Pay as usual.**" We were told that only bad citizens would cease to play golf, to follow the fashions, to enjoy holidays, to eat daintily, to dance, to shop, to go to the play. "Live as usual."

This advice is not wholly bad. It aims at keeping money in circulation and men and women in employment. But many writers of letters to the papers are pressing it too far. They seem to argue that every well-established habit of luxury and extravagance is a sacrosanct vested interest which must be kept in being. If we have been accustomed to eat caviare at a guinea a pound we must go on eating it, so that the caviare merchant shall not be ruined. If it has been our practice to buy half-a-dozen pairs of white kid gloves every week, we must pity the poor glover and go on buying. And so on.

Now the truth is that War is an unusual state of life which demands unusual arrangements. Since the last days of July, twenty million men have been rushed away from the farms and fisheries and mills and

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forges of Europe to fight. Fifty strokes of a dozen pens have changed twenty million producers into twenty million consumers. In other words, **Europe is not living as usual**, and we must adjust ourselves to her new life.

Even if we could be sure that there will be no scarcity of food and fuel and raiment, most of us would still be unwilling to live our usual comfortable lives while scores of thousands of Englishmen are faring roughly in the field. More. A time of War is a time for bracing up the whole life of a nation. The English had become too self-indulgent. Too many of us have been living right up to or beyond our incomes. In proportion to our numbers and responsibilities, we have had too many purveyors of luxuries, too many entertainers, too many actors and actresses and funny-men and musicians and novelists and painters and paid reformers and professional sportsmen. To take a single illustration, we have had **too many pale young men in "the drapery"** and not enough strapping fellows in the Army. When the War is over, we ought to be tougher, simpler, and therefore stronger.

Those who find these arguments superfine will perhaps listen to one more reason against "living as usual"—namely, that most of us will lack the money. Directly and indirectly, this War will cost England hundreds—perhaps thousands—of millions of pounds. Incomes will be smaller and taxes bigger ; and there will be appeals for the sick and wounded, for the widow and the orphan, which only hearts of flint will resist.

These are the principal reasons for publishing a

short manual of Home Cookery in War-time, such as may put us on sounder terms with both our consciences and our purses.

It is taken for granted throughout the following pages that the reader knows the A B C of cookery already, and that nobody is to expect much more than a number of sound hints on the departures from ordinary kitchen routine which the War may demand. Let nobody therefore open this book in order to learn how to peel a potato or trim a chop or choose a sirloin of beef. I assume from the outset that I am speaking to housewives who already possess an elementary all-round cookery-book, even if it be no bigger than the shilling edition of Mrs Beeton's justly admired work. The first principles of boiling and frying and baking and braising and steaming will be discussed only in so far as I believe that they are misunderstood in England.

Although we may learn much from France, this is **an English book for English homes**. France is, without doubt, the seat of the finest cookery in the world, and this praise applies not only to the *haute cuisine* but also to the wonderful *cuisine bourgeoise*. All the same, we must keep our heads. Englishwomen often return from holidays in France (where they have been whetting their appetites in the sea air and were in a mood to be pleased with everything), and straightway set about Frenchifying both their kitchens and their tables. They rush to buy books which purport to

expound French cookery to the English housewife ; and, in forty-nine cases out of fifty, they end by throwing up the experiment after making themselves and everybody else miserable. To take one example only, thousands of happy homes have been temporarily blighted by **the tyranny of the stock-pot**. Young wives find it writ large in the books that no kitchen is complete without a stock-pot, and that it is next door to downright sin not to keep one in constant use. Now a stock-pot is all that was ever claimed for it, provided the cook is to the manner born and that it is used in what may be called stock-pot conditions. In a country house, or farm, where rude plenty is the order of the day, a stock-pot is all to the good. It costs nothing for fuel, because the big kitchen fire is always burning. Every day there are many mouths to feed and a large quantity of stock is an unmixed blessing. But the case is altogether different when one turns to the small kitchen of a modern English house or London flat, where the gas stove has established itself so firmly that the kitchen range remains unkindled for six months out of twelve. In such kitchens the stock-pot takes up precious room and **adds to the gas bill** an amount out of all proportion to the value of the stock. Further, the mistress of a small establishment soon finds that she has not nearly so many odds and ends to throw into the stock-pot as she expected. In these days the butcher trims the meat more thoroughly than of yore and his example is followed, more or less, by all the other purveyors of eatables. Our grandmothers conducted their housekeeping in vastly different conditions. The huge joints for their large families, the poultry

and game which were skinned or plucked and cleaned in their own kitchens, and their wealth of raw and rough materials of every kind yielded them a constant supply of good by-products which were too often wasted although such scraps would have rejoiced a Frenchwoman's heart. Nowadays the poulterer cleans and trusses our birds, too often taking away the parts that would yield many a delicacy, such as a Cock-a-leekie *à la Française* (Leek Soup with giblets) or a Risotto *au foie de volaille*. The poulterer fillets our fish, the greengrocer often delivers only the choicest hearts of cabbage or cauliflower or lettuce, while the grocer sells us most of his goods in bottles and jars and tins and packets which contain nothing over and above what can be directly consumed. So let the superstition of the stock-pot as a universal obligation go; and with it let us bury most of the nonsense about **two penny-worth of bones**. Soup for twopence has a plausible sound; but when one reckons the cost of the gas and the flavourings, it will generally be found that a small quantity of one of the admirable new vegetable extracts (put up like Liebig's) costs no more money and gives a better result for less trouble. The discoverer of bone-soup a hundred years ago was patted on the head by kings and even by a Pope, but bare bones as now chopped up and simmered are a delusion and a snare. I have made grand stock from a ham-bone, correcting its saltiness by omitting all salt from the vegetables afterwards added: but that ham-bone had something on it and in it.

Instead of worrying with an unwieldy stock-pot, the good housewife will use the *beaux restes* of her

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game and poultry for special soups and for entrées of distinction instead of sacrificing them to augment a gallon of characterless stock. Without running a stock-pot three hundred and sixty-five days a year, stock can be made frequently from clean odds and ends, or from cheap meat, and used right up. When all else fails, foundations can be made cheaply and cleanly from beans. Butter beans and their like yield light-coloured stock, while flageolets and their brethren will give stock of darker hue. These bean stocks can be bottled and kept for some time, provided they are occasionally poured out and heated up.

Some people will feel that the foregoing paragraphs promise poorly so far as economy is concerned. Like rustics who believe that medicine must taste nasty if it is to do you good, they are persuaded that we must put up with unattractive food if we are to save money in war-time. This is a deadly error—deadly because it soon drives back those who hold it into their old extravagance. Men and women who have been accustomed to eat pleasantly and daintily will not succeed in making an abrupt change to coarse and unpleasant diet without injury to their health and tempers which will be found expensive in the long run. Everybody has heard of things that are “Cheap and Nasty”; but the cook’s motto in war-time will be **Cheap and Tasty**.

Cheapness and tastiness, however, are not everything. A dish might cost little, and look appetising,

and taste good, while at the same time it might be indigestible or without value as nourishment. We must have **Foods that feed**. But these pages will not be extended by means of long lists of foods arranged under elaborate headings in scientific terms. The few housekeepers who concern themselves with academic dietetics have not waited for the appearance of this little book in order to learn about proteids and starch and nitrogen and carbohydrates: and they know the chief points of "Food Values" already. As for the majority, they would either skip such information or read it and forget it a minute afterwards. But there is a more practical reason for omitting scientific tables. It sounds old-fashioned to say it, but in matters of diet we still get on best without too much theory. A day will dawn when the analyst will be able to tell us so much about our food that the art of medicine will be almost absorbed in dietetics; but that day has not dawned yet. People who live according to food tables certainly do not always convince us that they have found the golden secret of health and happiness. In the present state of chemistry, all the food tables ever printed are worth less than the old saw, "One man's meat is another man's poison." To certain constitutions certain foods are almost venomous. The writer knows a woman who can eat practically everything save honey; and a man who has the digestion of an ostrich for all other foods, but is upset by capers. To many people, some allowance of cereals and milk and sugar seems of vital importance, while others hate all such things and keep alive on lean red meat, fresh green vegetables and sharp wine. Through

not recognising these wide variations of constitution, most of the authors who have given us instruction in cheap cookery have done as much harm as good. They prescribe messes of pottage in which split peas and lentils and all kinds of pulse predominate to such an extent that there is positive danger to those whose bodies are not built for such diet.

It follows that the Compleat Cook must **understand not only the food but the feeders**. This will help her to steer clear of many a disappointment. Now and then it will call for the taking of additional pains, because it may be necessary to provide two small dishes instead of one large. On the other hand, it will often help towards economy, because *beaux restes* are often enough for one but not enough for two. Many a housewife, in the intimacy of a small home, will urge her son or husband to finish some small remnant on the ground that it is not worth keeping and that it would "only have to be thrown away." The son or husband has probably already eaten quite as much as is good for him—otherwise he would have asked for what is left on the dish—but he accepts the morsel and overfeeds himself. Once let a housewife accept the notion of occasionally making up a tiny entrée, enough for one person only, and she will often find the problem of an informal home dinner half solved. The Brute will get something he likes; while she herself, for a change, will be able to enjoy a little dish all her very own, according to her mood and appetite. Where the staff is small (and this book is written first and foremost for modest establishments) wives are usually averse from any multiplication of entrées on the

ground that they make so much **washing-up**. This, however, is a hardship that must be faced. It will be faced the more easily when one examines it fairly. A choice of entrées does not increase the washing-up so frightfully, after all. In any case, the cook who is willing to lose the charm of variety and the satisfaction of economy merely to save fifty or sixty seconds in the washing-up had better put this book down and read no more of it. But let **her** first examine her conscience and ascertain whether her horror of washing-up may not be due to her skimping the dry-soap and the clean dry towels.

Food values bring to the mind the whole question of **Food Fads**. The War has stirred up scores of well-meaning enthusiasts, who are convinced that the Kaiser is really doing us a good turn, because England will be led to solve her food problem by vegetarianism, or paper-bag cookery, or "unfired diet," or the steady munching of nuts. Let us be quite fair. There is something useful at the heart of every fad, just as there is truth buried inside nearly every error. We shall therefore do wisely to profit by the kernel of any fad that is thrust upon us, so long as we throw the husks away. **Vegetarianism**, for example, has a good deal in it, just as there is a good deal in "Temperance." The true wisdom is to steer between the Scylla of excess and the Charybdis of total abstinence. By combining the more liberal use of vegetables with some of the flavourings and strengthenings of ordinary cookery (such as good gravy or meat broth) we could often save money and increase our enjoyment. As

for "natural" and "unfired" food, it is true that uncooked food, such as apples and pears and salads, can do nothing but good to those who use them wisely. The **paper bag**, which was known to cooks long before the oldest Englishman now living was born, is excellent for some dishes, always provided that the right kind of paper is chosen and that it is used in the right way ; but the cook who tries to use paper bags for everything has become a faddist to be pitied and avoided. As for **nuts**, they certainly have a high food value, and all the best-known monkeys do exceedingly well on them so long as they can get insects and reptiles also ; but only a minority of human beings, bred and born as we are, can exist upon them as a staple food. If nuts should abound in our copses this year, we ought to thank Providence and see that none are wasted ; but there must be something besides a sack of nuts in the pantry. Other fads, especially the proprietary and much-advertised fad foods which claim to have been **predigested**, and to contain the nourishing elements of eggs or milk or meat or wheat in a highly concentrated form, are not to be received with our arms too widely open. The human body has been fitted, through long ages, to receive new life from foods which are not concentrated at all. Their body-building and heat-making and blood-enriching and bone-forming and nerve-strengthening elements are dispersed in vehicles (or "inert" substances) which call for mastication and for consumption in such bulk that, without being a glutton, one escapes the sensation of an empty stomach. It may be quite true that a spoonful of this or that or the other patent preparation is equal in food value, from the analyst's

point of view, to a nice little lamb cutlet with green peas and a couple of new potatoes. It may also be true that the spoonful of essence can be swallowed in ten seconds, while the lamb cutlet requires ten minutes. Nevertheless the essence, with its too swift and local onslaught upon the system, will be found to do the consumer worlds less good. "A Lunch in a Tea-spoon" and a "Two-minute Dinner" are the ideals of many serious persons who tell us that we should eat to live and not live to eat. No man, however, is living aright if he becomes a miserable creature. To sit decently over a snowy cloth and to treat respectfully the good gifts of God as they come before us in all their variety cannot fairly be called "Living to Eat." Indeed such a meal, enlivened by talk, is a refining and spiritualising of the act of feeding and is all on the side of progress. [The concentrated fad-foods are often useful in emergencies, and a really clever and original cook can turn them to all sorts of uses. For the most part, however, they are dear, because the purchaser must pay not only for the contents of the packet but for a proportion of the enormous sums which have been spent in advertising the brand.]

To those who have decided by this time that I am a reactionary empiric, I give the advice that they should hurry back to the shop of the unprincipled bookseller who sold them this deplorable work and that (after tendering the shilling or so of difference in price) they should insist on his exchanging it for the popular edition of Sir Henry Thompson's "Food

and Feeding." Sir Henry Thompson's is a good book. I do not say that a novice would arise from its perusal a Compleat Cook, as Minerva sprang full-armed from the brain of Jove. But "Food and Feeding" is sane and learned and human. Its analyses of food values are both scientific and practical.

I must here warn beginners against certain statements as to food values in the propaganda of **Food Reformers**. Only this morning I encountered some perilous advice about Brazil nuts, "the kernels of which contain over ninety per cent." of outright nutriment. A little knowledge is dangerous indeed to those who do not know how to apply it. I often meet a young man, with a fine scorn for "flesh-eaters," who is overfeeding himself so grossly on nuts and sugary dried fruits that he would be more temperate if he ate a pound of beef every day.

Too much dietetic doctrine rivets his chains more firmly than ever on the hypochondriac. I remember obtaining leave one day from an indulgent hostess in a house on the south coast to make some horse-radish cream my own way. Now all persons who have rubbed a large fresh-pulled horse-radish on a small and worn-out nutmeg grater know the price that must be paid in smarting eyes and scalding tears : and they will not blame me for having felt annoyed when a dear old gentleman, of conservative temperament, at the luncheon-table, refused my cream on the ground that he didn't see any reason for changing the old recipe. Perceiving, however, that he was a hypochondriac, I let drop the remark that horse-radish

was good for the heart. He continued to eat his roast beef plain : but it is literally true that, late in the day, I stumbled on the same dear old gentleman, in a grandfather's chair, eating the remains of my cream with a spoon.

In the houses where this kind of book is bought and read, men and women are over-nourished rather than underfed. This means that meals of high "food value" may do more harm than good. Grown-up persons do not need much feeding. Indeed the first and best hint for saving money on our food in war-time is as plain as a haystack : because it is merely : **Let us eat less.** Watch some men, especially city men, at their midday lunch, and you will see that each mouthful is too large and that it is swallowed too quickly. Without running into the other extreme, and mincing like Victorian schoolgirls, we ought to eat and drink temperately, deliberately ; for in no other way can we fully enjoy our food and benefit by it.

Smaller quantities and cheaper qualities of food will not mean a blunting of the reasonable pleasure of the table, so long as we have **variety**. One reason why so many Englishmen insist on having always the prime joints of meat and the dearest cuts of bacon is to be found in the monotony of their diet. When there is no charm of surprise to whet the appetite, the palate finds its satisfaction in superfine and therefore expensive quality. That cat meant well which

brought Sir Walter Raleigh a pigeon every day while he was writing his unreadable "History of the World" in the Tower of London, but I do not doubt that the prisoner became dreadfully peevish on the days when the pigeons were not plump and tender.

I count among my friends an interesting couple who firmly believe that they are enthusiasts for cookery. Their culinary library certainly contains seven thousand recipes: but they do not eat seventy different dishes in a year.

Variety is charming: and, controlled by common-sense, it is cheap.

A wit once wrote a parody on a cookery-book and began one of his recipes with the words, "Take about eight ounces of anything you have got." He wrote more wisely than he knew. If I were asked to state in a single sentence the fundamental rule for Home Cookery in War-time I should say: "**Plan your dishes with what you have.**" In the chapter on "**Going to Market**" I shall try to bring out this truth from another point of view; but it is so important that it had better begin to be hammered into the reader here and now. Cook with what you have, or with what you can most easily obtain.

Perhaps I shall be allowed to illustrate this point by a simple personal experience. One Sunday afternoon I found myself alone in a tiny house just outside London. The "cook-general" had been called away immediately after serving a conventional British Sunday midday meal consisting of roast beef,

boiled potatoes and white cabbage. The house was one where I knew that I could do just as I pleased without offending my hostess and her family, who had stated that they would return about half-past eight for a homely supper of cold beef and pickled walnuts and red wine. It was January, and a sharp frost prevailed. Cold beef and pickles had a shivery sound. Could nothing be improvised that would give a warmer welcome? I looked round the pantry and found little beyond a fine Spanish onion, a couple of turnips and the remains of the midday meal. On a shelf, however, there stood a little white pot of the vegetable extract called "Marmite," which tastes like Liebig or Bovril, though meat has nothing to do with it. I sliced the Spanish onion into the thinnest possible slices and put them in a large enamelled stewpan on the gas stove, with enough boiling water for them to move in freely, and set them to boil. Having prepared the turnips, I cut these also into quite small pieces so that they should cook more quickly. Meanwhile I foraged in other cupboards and found some tomato catsup, some Worcestershire sauce, some tapioca and about a tablespoonful of Burgundy at the bottom of a decanter. As soon as the pieces of onion and turnip showed that they were half cooked, I put a teaspoonful of the Marmite at the bottom of a basin and poured on the water from the stewpan. After this had been well stirred, the basin contained a quite respectable broth which I seasoned and poured back over the turnips and onion. While the cooking of these vegetables in the broth continued, I cut up the cold white cabbage, of which there was quite a considerable quantity, as too much had been boiled in

the first instance. The strips of cabbage were transferred to the stewpan, together with some of the gravy of the beef and a meagre handful of tapioca. By this time it was possible to turn down the gas under the briskly boiling stewpan and to add a teaspoonful of Worcestershire sauce and about six times the quantity of the tomato catsup. The cold potatoes were broken up with a fork and stirred in with the other things. These operations were taken in hand at about five o'clock, and they occupied less than half-an-hour. The pan, with the lid on, remained over the smallest possible flame for about three hours. If my friends had returned an hour late, no harm would have been done. Of course I interrupted my reading and writing occasionally to stir the stuff with a wooden spoon and to taste it from time to time. The tastings proved the need for a little more salt and pepper. About eight o'clock I added the glass of wine ; but, long before this time, the frosty air was warmed and cheered by the most savoury and comfortable of odours. Soup-plates were laid to warm in a bowl of hot water, while I cut some slices of bread and butter in the country fashion, not too thin, and each piece the whole breadth of the "household loaf." This rather close-grained bread, when it is a day old, carries a surface of butter delightfully as compared with the square loaves baked in tins.

My mess of pottage—it was certainly a mess—had been intended merely as a piping-hot prelude to the cold beef ; but everybody came up for a second helping and the beef went away untouched. The contents of the stewpan seemed to be inexhaustible. Of course the bottle of Macon made a difference, as

the pottage was not fluid like a soup. One ate it with a fork and a spoon.

This is a rather long account of a very rough-and-ready experiment, but it will serve to bring out the principal doctrine of these pages. Among those who devoured the dish so heartily sat a woman who hates onions, and a man who loathes tapioca, and a child with a horror of Worcestershire sauce ; yet not one of these persons discerned their abominations. The onion had boiled down into a perfect unity with the broth, and the tapioca survived only as a slight thickening, suggestive of the kind of stock which cools into a good jelly. The cabbage maintained its texture, as had been intended. But let it be most clearly understood that the whole thing was carried through as a homely rustic supper, as far from restaurant ideals as the South Pole is from the Equator. When the lady who hated onions asked me for the recipe, I was careful to explain that recipes belonged to entirely different undertakings. A recipe expresses the best possible way of cooking a certain dish, and it presupposes that the cook will obtain all the specified ingredients in their given proportions. My modest pottage was arrived at by an exact reversal of recipe methods. In carrying out a recipe, one says : " I want to make a certain soup : I must get together the necessary things." On that nipping Sunday night, however, I said : " Here are certain things : what can be best done with them for some hungry people returning from a cold journey ? " If there had been carrots in the house instead of turnips, or if the remains of the cabbage had been scanty, or if the cold sirloin had been more undercooked, no doubt I

should have prepared something entirely different. Any merit that there was, lay in the adjustment of **means to ends**. And if the housekeepers of England will accept this principle and apply it they will have acquired half the art of Home Cookery in War-time.

CHAPTER II

THE KITCHEN AND THE LARDER

WHEN a battleship clears for action, all sorts of things are pitched overboard. Down into the green depths go the piano and all the landlubbers' tables and chairs. And, if we are to take up the simplifying of our daily lives in real earnest and with a determination not to drift back into our old ways, we shall do well to go through our larders and our kitchens and to put them, so to speak, on a War footing. For example, almost every **pantry** contains tinned and bottled and jarred provisions, and oddments of dripping and condiments, which have been on the shelves quite long enough. Let these be brought out into the daylight and examined. On the principle laid down at the end of the foregoing chapter, it should be found possible to get rid of some of them by working them up into unconventional combinations which will have the charm of novelty and perhaps even the excitement of discovery. But of course no prudent storekeeper will use her tinned fruits and tinned vegetables and tinned fishes while the fresh article is cheap and abundant. Only an hour or two before writing this paragraph I have had the deplorable experience of eating some tinned French beans in a house where the new crop of the same vegetable can be bought for twopence-halfpenny a pound; and I learn that preserved pears were served yesterday at a

luncheon given by some high-minded ladies to discuss this very question of cheap food in time of War.

In overhauling the shelves it will probably be found that there has been waste in buying. When servants are allowed to go shopping, or to give orders at the door to the tradesman's assistant, or to draw up lists of requirements, they almost always buy extravagantly. Sometimes out of a mere desire to be important, sometimes from a much lower motive, they ask for the largest bottles of vinegar and of oil, the biggest tins of mustard, and enough pepper to make a whole parish sneeze. Before these things are half consumed the vinegar develops ropy dregs, the oil turns bad, and the pepper becomes all meek and mild. Now is the time to make rough estimates of the weekly consumption and to see that money is saved in such a way as to heighten rather than lower the quality of one's stores.

Forgotten jars will come to light. It may be that the price of fruit will be so low that it will still pay to make large quantities of **jam**, in spite of the higher price of sugar, and every jar or wide-mouthed bottle may come in useful. Indeed sugar is not indispensable. **Bottled fruits** are exceedingly cheap to prepare and are more useful than jam, except where there are children and people with a sweet tooth. Those who do not possess the proper equipment for fruit-bottling may simply place the fruit in bottles (taking care that they are perfectly dry) and then put the full bottles for a quarter of an hour in a hot oven, finally filling them up with boiling water. And this is the place for a useful hint. A stopper of mutton fat will solve the almost hopeless problem of finding bungs or

metal tops to fit the jars and bottles. Mutton fat is very cheap indeed, and the butcher is glad to sell it.

Pickles should not be forgotten. When they are home-made according to the very simple directions in the regular cookery books, they are nearly always relished, and they send down many a piece of cold meat which would otherwise be a penance. **Nasturtium** seeds are excellent when pickled, and they put a wonderful amount of life into all sorts of dishes, although few cooks serve them except with mayonnaise, or boiled cod, or mutton.

In the **kitchen** and the **scullery** a similar stock-taking should be made, and utensils which have been long disused should be either furbished up and brought into action, or packed away in a box to be given to the most suitable Relief Committee, or to poor persons who have a genuine use for them. At the same time perhaps it will be necessary to spend a few shillings on earthenware cooking-pots. This is not a time for laying out money lightly, but the cost of a few casseroles, large, small and medium, will soon be recouped. Indeed such vessels are absolutely necessary to the successful practice of cheap and nourishing and appetising cookery. What we call roast joints (by which most people mean joints baked in an oven) are not cheap as a rule, and they are often unattractive after the first day. Besides, quite apart from the question of economy, meat is far better when it is cooked slowly at a more moderate temperature. For those who live in or near London the best and cheapest region in which to buy a **casserole** is Soho,

where the right article is in constant demand by French *ménagères* and *restaurateurs*. The shop-keeper who sells it is generally willing to tell the English novice all sorts of curious things about the wrong and right use of a casserole. For example, he will probably advise that it should be rubbed all over with half of a raw onion before its first exposure to the fire, as he believes that it will last much longer after such treatment.

Any **enamelled saucepan** which has failed to keep a whole skin must be sentenced to death. It is not to be given to the charwoman or even thrown into the dustbin. If a saucepan with a bald patch in the lining is dangerous to you and your family, it will be equally dangerous to the charwoman's son Clarence or to the dustman's little daughter Eva. If you are dead against waste, you can save the saucepan for a day when you wish to relieve a fit of bad temper and you can then bash it out of shape with your largest hammer. In short, you may do anything you like with it except allow it to be used for cooking. One day last week I took a lot of trouble telling some friends how to prepare a new Friday soup, with milk, cocoanut butter, fish stock, a minced onion, a packet of dried fish in flakes, and some small pieces of macaroni. In working out this novelty I had been attentive to details and it was hard to see how my friends could go wrong. They chose, however, to effect the cooking in a large enamelled stewpan from which the enamel had disappeared in the most vital spot. Of course the pieces of macaroni stuck to the bare metal and the whole mixture was ruined, although I had succeeded beyond my hopes a day or two

before by using exactly similar materials in a sound vessel. [Some of the worst of the cheap enamelled goods came from Germany, and it is to be hoped that we shall not try to capture this branch of Germany's trade.] There is one kind of saucepan which I cannot help recommending by name. It bears the well-known "Gourmet" mark and most ironmongers seem to be able to get it. The lid (as well as the sides and the bottom) is enamelled internally and there is an extra bottom with a fireproof lining so that the contents of the pan cannot burn. I am not referring to an ordinary **double-cooker**, in which the food-receptacle fits into a lower pan of boiling water. There ought, however, to be a double-cooker in every good kitchen, as well as arrangements for doing the work of a **bain-marie**. In short, there must be an all-round equipment for the kinds of cookery which avoid close contact with fierce heat.

A cheap **steamer** ought to be in every kitchen, but it is sometimes missing even in houses which contain all sorts of expensive and foolish little futilities for making mayonnaise or cutting up cucumbers. Most kinds of fish and vegetables are far better steamed than boiled, while a much greater proportion of their most valuable elements is retained. I remember once being allowed to taste the convicts' dinner at Portland. It included some steamed potatoes so delicious that (having wrestled with an infamously boiled potato at the hotel only an hour or two before) I could no longer believe that the way of the transgressor is hard.

A **frying-pan** is a tool to be mentioned with circum-

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spection. Of late years a saying has been going round to the effect that if you want to get rid of indigestion your first act must be to throw the frying-pan away. To those people who are too lazy or too obstinate to learn the true method of frying, such advice is excellent, because most of the fried food served in England is indigestible in the extreme. True frying, however, is quite a different thing from the flinging of slices of fresh or cured flesh or cylinders of sausage meat to be scorched with a little grease in a shallow pan. The sound way is to use a pan deep enough to hold a bath of boiling fat in which the food to be fried can be completely immersed. Full directions on this point will be found in every standard cookery book and must be studied by every cook who has not mastered them already. As boiling fat is nearly twice as hot as boiling water, it is obvious that wonders can be worked with its aid ; because a film forms instantly on the food placed in the bath and all the finest juices and flavours are prevented from escaping. A little practice with white blotting-paper or a cloth will soon enable any handy and intelligent person to rid the finished friture of greasiness, because the frying-fat at its hottest is not at all sticky but comes away with surprising ease. Cooking **oil**, which need not be the purest pressings from the olives of Provence, but should not be of too low a grade, is the best frying medium. Of course it can be used over and over again, provided one watches for the little danger-signal of smoke so that it never overpasses the safe maximum of heat. **Beef dripping** is also an excellent frying fat, and it seems easier to procure than of old. Indeed the most famous of

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Mayfair purveyors has begun to sell the highest quality of beef dripping at sixpence a pound.

Turning from the kitchen to the **china closet**, it will be seemly to put away the thinnest glass and the most costly china. During the War we shall hate the idea of drinking expensive Champagne and rare vintages of Burgundy and Claret and we shall be equally impatient of elaborate and ceremonious dinners. So let the fine things be hoarded against the day of victory. We shall enjoy our less luxurious fare all the more if we eat it from plain white or willow-pattern plates—preferably the plain white. And let the most exquisite of our napery be stored up with the finest of our glass and china. When our relatives and friends come back from the War, we shall like them to know that we have not been clothing ourselves in purple and fine linen and faring sumptuously every day, but that we have tried to share, afar off, what St Paul would have called “the fellowship of their sufferings.”

CHAPTER III

GOING TO MARKET

No man can make an omelette without breaking eggs, or grill a steak when he has no steak to grill, or braise a Spanish onion which he does not possess. The fame of Mrs Glasse survives solely in the misquotation which advises you to "First catch your hare and then cook it." In these days we are no longer pot-hunters. Having acquired money in a struggle for existence fiercer than any cave-dweller's, we go to the men who sell birds and beasts and fishes and eggs and butter and vegetables and fruits. They also are struggling for existence, and, even in Peace-time, it is necessary that we should watch them keenly.

The English are not a thrifty nation. With the exception of a small minority, made up for the most part of self-made people, everybody lives up to his income. Two husbands out of three are convinced that their households ought to be run more cheaply; and forty-nine wives out of fifty honestly believe that no other woman could perform the marvels of parsimony which they accomplish every day. This is a curious state of things. Nearly all wives are loyal and nearly all of them find it hard to make both ends meet; yet the year's menus in a typical English home would suggest that a nice little sum is being saved up for a rainy day. The explanation is two-fold. English housekeepers rarely **get the most out of**

what they buy ; and they rarely **buy to the best advantage**. This chapter is concerned with the question of buying.

I lived six years ago in a house so situated that there was a wide choice of routes to London. To reach one of the tram-lines I had to pass through a quarter inhabited by the upper working class, who favoured bay-windowed houses, all alike, with plaster horses in the semicircular windows over the front doors and with tinny pianos or raucous harmoniums in the never-ventilated parlours. Sometimes I went in the opposite direction, to a station, and walked up leafy avenues where every house lacked a number and was dubbed "Sans Souci," or "The Wigwam," or worse. And every morning I saw the same sad sight. Neither Mrs Smith of 749 Jubilee Road nor Mrs Smythe of "The Rowans," Beechcroft Avenue, seemed to realise that she ought to go to market. She expected the market to come to her. In Jubilee Road the market took the form of a coster's barrow in charge of a beery gentleman whose voice was the worse for wear. In Beechcroft Avenue the market was represented by a pert young man in a ready-made blue suit, who always had enough time on his hands to exchange gallantries with Mrs Smythe's housemaid. I do not doubt that both Mrs Smith and Mrs Smythe truly loved their husbands and that they would have given their little fingers to avoid the recurring financial discussions which soured life at "The Rowans" and at No. 749. It simply did not occur to them that a market which comes to one's door is no market at all.

I have lost sight of both these equally estimable ladies, but I do not doubt that they are being hurried to their graves by the houndings of monetary worry.

As this book is written more for "The Rowans" than for Jubilee Road (where literature is not habitually encouraged), it will be practical to confine ourselves to the errors of Mrs Smythe. Shortly after the departure of Mr Smythe to the city, his spouse hears the bell ringing and is met by her servant with the words: "The butcher, mum." Now what takes place in Mrs Smythe's mind? She tells herself that she had ribs of beef on Sunday; that she ordered veal cutlets for Tuesday night; that a beef steak was bought on Wednesday; that Friday will be a fish day; and that therefore to-day, Thursday, it would be nice to have half-a-leg of mutton—the shank end. Accordingly she says: "Tell him to send half-a-leg—the shank end—of mutton, not too big." Sometimes, by good luck, this turns out to be a happy shot. But on other occasions it will not do at all. The young man in the blue suit passes from "The Rowans" to "The Lindens," and thence to "The Hollies" and "The Beeches" and all the other trees of the forest. When he returns to the shop, his notebook is an awkward document. If divine Providence had only been pleased to give mankind a sheep with nine legs and only one shoulder, the butcher's task would be easy; but this, after all, would not solve the problem, as the next day's orders might require a sheep consisting entirely of chump chops. The butcher does his best; but, like soldiers and other men of blood and steel, butchers are usually men of few words, and they have a deep-seated horror of ladies' tongues.

It follows that Mrs Smythe, who is a good customer, paying promptly and never complaining, may not get her shank end after all, but has to put up with the upper half of the leg, while the chatelaine of "Kenilworth," who spends three-and-ninepence a week and is always threatening to go to another butcher, gets the pick of the shop. Meanwhile the butcher is loaded up with fore-quarters and saddles which nobody wants. Further, as he has delivered all the half-legs on credit, he has to take the risk of never getting his three-and-ninepence from "Kenilworth," which means that "The Rowans" must pay perhaps a half-penny a pound more. Also, somebody must pay for the young man's blue suit and for his modest expenditure when he takes Mrs Smythe's maid out on Sunday afternoons. In short, the whole affair is what the learned would call an uneconomic transaction. And when it is extended to the fishmonger, the greengrocer, the Italian warehouseman and the provision merchant, the wonder is how Mr Smythe has kept a roof over Mrs Smythe's head.

On the way to my station stood a row of shops—the very shops from which the blue young man and his colleagues went forth every morning. And there or thereabouts I often saw an edifying sight. A young matron, a neighbour of the lady whom I have called Mrs Smythe, though her superior in birth and social standing, was to be met every day, like a Frenchwoman with her *bonne*, going to market. She was always prettily but sensibly dressed in blue linen or old-fashioned print; always unflurried; always beaming and healthy. Once or twice I happened to be in shops while she was shopping. I noticed that

she never took a memorandum from her little bag in order to buy the materials for a premeditated menu. The market came first and the menu afterwards. Holding to the great principle that what is cheapest and most abundant in the market is generally what is best, she seemed to get the pick of everything at about two-thirds the prices paid by her stay-at-home neighbours for less desirable purchases. Yet there was no beating down or chaffering in the French manner. Her rosy little servant received the purchases into a net bag there and then, thus ending all risk of underweight and overcharge and changing, not to mention the ugly dangers of corrupt manœuvres on the part of the young man in blue. No doubt this clever woman had acquired a general sense of menu-making which enabled her to resist the seductions of mere cheapness, so that she would not, for example, have combined salmon, and duck, and strawberries-and-cream in one short dinner ; but her obvious rule was to base her cuisine upon the market. I invoke her gracious image as I write and beseech her to be the patron saint of this chapter.

I am bound to warn my docile readers that when they put these counsels into practice they will not enjoy their first shopping expeditions. In some places it still requires a little courage to go out with one's servant and to come back with one's dinner. But this War will be a poor affair if it does not blow away the remains of snobbery from all decent people. The idea that nobody of gentle birth can be seen carrying a parcel is not quite dead, but the War

should kill it. Thousands of the best of our race are carrying heavy knapsacks at this moment under a scorching sun, and it will not disgrace their sisters to bear home a whiting or even a cauliflower. Some of the tradesmen will sniff a little superciliously ; but, when one thinks it over, such sniffs are not of the first importance. Besides, the sniffs sometimes mean that the tradesman discerns the beginnings of a new relationship in which he will be obliged to treat his customer with more punctilious fairness.

The housewife with common-sense will soon distinguish between tradesmen who are white and tradesmen who are shady. Among the shops to avoid is the shop with two prices for the same article. Some tradesmen will sell you, without a word of haggling, for elevenpence, a pound of bacon for which they will ask another customer tenpence or a shilling, and there is the same risk with all goods at fluctuating prices. No doubt it is to avoid this danger that thousands of people have given up shopping altogether and have decided to "Order everything from the stores." The best stores give good value and careful service ; but, with all respect to them, better and cheaper cookery can be achieved by the housekeeper who will learn the ways of her local market. Happily, almost every part of London is now blessed with a few good shops where the prices of perishable foods are prominently displayed. Many of the fishmongers, for example, exhibit blackboards on which they chalk the prices of the day, sometimes adding the information that such and such a fish is cheap. The largest greengrocers also state their prices plainly. But when one turns to the butcher it is rare to see price

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tickets, except in the low-grade establishments. For this omission the butcher has a partial excuse. People are a little unreasonable in their ideas of boning and trimming a piece of meat at the butcher's expense, and they will often, after deciding on a joint, say that it is rather more than they want and that they cannot take it unless it is reduced in size—an operation which may mean a loss. Still, the butcher is a man who wants careful watching.

As soon as you have decided which **butcher** seems likely to suit you best, it is well to treat him openly and to trust him so long as he plays the game. It is quite a mistake to think that he despises everybody who does not buy sirloins of beef, legs of lamb, fillet steaks and the other prime cuts. The truth is that he is quite glad to sell, at half the price of the prime cuts, the brisket and the flank which hardly anybody asks for, although these parts can be made delicious by processes explained in all cookery books. Necks of mutton and stewing beef, which are better for many purposes than legs and sirloins, are part of the butcher's stock and he wants to sell them.

When one has become a fairly good and regular customer, it is fair to insist that the butcher shall not be disobliging with such things as calf's liver, sweetbread, tongues and ox-tails. In some shops the request for these things is always met by a smile and a shake of the head, sometimes accompanied by valuable anatomical information to the effect that an ox has only one tail and that everybody cannot expect to get it. An ox-tail is a most desirable pur-

chase, especially in cold weather, and no housekeeper ought to accept constant refusals. As for the sweetbread and the pick of the calf's liver, I remember a town where an English resident could hardly get these delicacies at the principal butcher's. A Frenchwoman, always alluded to with great reverence as "Maddum," doggedly insisted on having them for her rather extensive entertaining, and, if the butcher presumed to disappoint her, he was promptly and sharply told that she would not darken his shop door again. This was an extreme case; but selfishness almost as great is to be found in every locality, and it is one's duty gently to insist that greedy people shall not be rewarded for their meanness.

A good butcher will be rather flattered than otherwise if you ask his advice, provided that you do so at a slack time of his day. He will pickle or marinate the cheaper cuts for you and, when he finds that you are not a grumbler and that you want him to have his fair profit, he will give you the advantage on stocks which he wants to sell. He does not like suspicions expressed about the origin of this or the other joint, but when he is fairly and openly asked if he can supply chilled South American beef (which is often excellent), or the admirable New Zealand lamb known as "Canterbury," he will answer you honestly. Should he sell you any chilled meat, it will be as well to consult him about thawing it, as sad things have happened through a neglect of this precaution. I write this page a day or two after meeting with a case in point. A body of Red Cross workers, most of whom hold certificates for proficiency in cooking, sat down to their own dinner after a laborious day. Their joint—

a leg of lamb—came out of the oven smelling adorably. It was browned and apparently a little overcooked, in the way which nearly every woman loves. But, when the carver's knife laid it open, the inside had the appearance of raw meat and, when touched with the finger, struck almost as cold as meat that had not been cooked at all. The certificated cooks pounced on all the frying-pans they could find and made a dinner of slices fried in the English style.

Smaller purchases should not be left for the butcher's boy to deliver but should be taken straight home. Larger cuts ought always to be weighed as soon as they arrive: because the weight sometimes fails to agree with what was charged for. And here and there a butcher will be found trying to play the meanest of all mean tricks, such as sending home the hoof of a full-grown sheep with the leg of a baa-lamb, and adding to the bones and fat which you have asked him to remove from your joint some bones and fat belonging to an entirely different beast. A little observation suffices to teach anybody of intelligence whether he is being made to carry more than his fair burden of fat and bones.

At the **fishmonger's**, marketing is easier than at the butcher's. In these days of abundant ice all the year round, bad fish is a rarity. Among the good fish it requires skill and experience to choose out those which have been most lately caught. Most housewives are forced, therefore, to depend upon the fishmonger's good faith, and happily they may often do so without disaster. Should a beginner read these lines,

I can only warn her to see that the flesh of her fish is not flabby, that the eyes are bright and not sunken, and that there is no stale odour.

On some days **cod** is very cheap. It is a fish which many people find insipid, because it is so often served sodden from a pan of boiling water, with plain potatoes and a so-called sauce which would do admirably for bill-posting but for little else. Steaks of cod, nicely grilled, are delightful. A large piece of steamed cod can also be made attractive, and what remains of it should be pounded smooth, and flavoured and **potted** for breakfast.

Herrings are likely to figure among our principal blessings while the War lasts. Large quantities of them used to be sent to Germany, and we shall have the benefit of what the Germans must now do without. If herrings were caught in only one bight or sea-lough in all the world, gourmets would cheerfully pay a crown apiece for them and would give herring dinners in the most expensive restaurants. But, these fish being absurdly cheap, an idea has got about that they are slightly vulgar and one has had to be a bold man to include the herring in the menu of a formal dinner. At formal dinners, salmon, lobster, trout, turbot and soles—especially soles—have had it nearly all their own way. Some diners-out come to hate the sight of salmon by the third week of the season, and would be filled with secret joy if they could exchange a portion which has cost the hostess a shilling for a small fresh herring which would **cost a penny or less**. Herrings require some surgical skill and patience, because of the bones ; but many other delicacies, such as quails and walnuts, demand deft

handling, and we do not shun them on that account. A grilled herring with potatoes is said to be an almost perfect food, and when the peasantry of Munster and Connaught can add buttermilk to this diet they seem to be the happiest and healthiest of men.

Of recent years the fishmongers have begun to sell a fish called **rock salmon**, which is remarkably cheap and very good eating. After pursuing some pains-taking studies, I find that the fish appears to be called rock-salmon because it is not salmon and has nothing to do with rocks. Its true name is "cat-fish," and when encountered in the water it certainly has a cattish head which is less attractive than that of a smoke-blue Persian pussy at a show. It is by no means an unclean fish; indeed its head is furnished with an arrangement which enables it to crack open oysters and to feed upon them. One might almost say that in buying sixpenny-worth of rock salmon one is sometimes getting oysters to the value of about five shillings thrown in. When no third party is listening, I generally ask the fishmonger for cat-fish by its proper name, but some of the rising generation of fishmongers do not know what is meant. Rock salmon can be served in many ways, but I find it best steamed and served with a rosy sauce.¹

Whiting, "the chicken of the sea," when fried in a deep bath of oil or dripping, make a pleasant change at a low price. **Skate**, which is heartily despised by hundreds of thousands of people, will delight the

¹ After writing the above lines, my attention was drawn to a cookery book in which rock salmon is identified with hake; but in the London shops it is certainly cat-fish. I bought one weighing nearly four pounds for a shilling on 8th September 1914.

palates of hundreds of thousands of others when it is prepared *au beurre noir*—that is to say, with butter melted and turned dark by means of a few drops of vinegar and some capers. And nearly everybody will like skate, *à l'Indienne*, which is practically a curry, the fish being served amidst some well-boiled rice and drowned in curry sauce.

By going to the fishmonger's instead of letting his assistant come bicycling round to your tradesmen's entrance for orders, you will often be able to buy the finer kinds of fish at low prices. The market is occasionally glutted. I could name a restaurant in London where a low-principled proprietor was in the habit of passing off halibut for turbot in some of the made dishes, such as *Coquilles de Turbot* and *Turbot Mornay*. Through inattention to the market he served these impostures two or three days running when turbot was selling much more cheaply than halibut. And I have known a day when a stay-at-home housewife was giving cod to her family at a price which would have bought (allowing for the more concentrated nature of the richer fish) an equal ration of salmon.

Plaice, limandes (generally spoken of as **lemon soles**) and other second-class fish are sometimes dear out of proportion to their merits. But **mackerel** is always a good purchase when there is no doubt about its freshness. Indeed mackerel is often much more enjoyable than salmon when hot, and it is also a tasty and satisfying cold luncheon dish when it has been "soused." Fresh **haddock** must not be overlooked; but some of the richly coloured objects which are passed off as fillets of haddock are dis-

appointing. The genuine smoked fillet stews beautifully in milk and butter in an earthenware pot ; but the wrong article can only be commended to those who eat fish as a penance.

Shellfish are often cheap. Great care needs to be taken with **mussels**, but when you have the right specimens and know how to prepare them they are hailed with joy by those who like them, especially when marinated in the French way, with a sauce like a fish soup, which one can eat with a spoon. A few mussels are also necessary when one wants to improve some steamed fillets of rather tasteless fish by dressing them in the mode which all cookery books describe under the name of *Normande*. As for **scallops**, there is nothing much more distinguished than a *Coquille St Jacques*. The scallop shells ought not to be thrown away, and the hot scallops should be served therein.

The papers, especially the religious weeklies, usually contain brief advertisements in which certain Grimsby firms offer to send **by Parcel Post** small packages of fresh fish already prepared for cooking. They sometimes give the purchaser quite a large quantity for a couple of shillings. In the long run, however, most people find this no cheaper than buying fish locally. Where there are large families and the church's precept is closely obeyed on days of abstinence, these Grimsby packages may be taken regularly with advantage ; but in small households there would often be waste unless the cook is clever at potting the surplus.

What has been said about carrying home one's smaller purchases from the butcher applies to the

fishmonger as well. I have seen fillets of sole which could not possibly have been fitted to the skeletons of the fish which I had chosen and paid for. Still, on the whole, the fishmonger will treat you fairly well if you are reasonable with him and are not above taking his advice.

At the **poulterer's**, a patriotic housewife will deny herself the luxury of young chickens until the War is over. We ought to let most of the chickens grow up to lay eggs for us. Eggs will be dear. By increasing our home output, we may succeed in permanently securing a larger share of the egg trade for our own population. As for the bigger chickens, these should be kept as much as possible for the sick and wounded. Chicken broth and little pieces from the breast are tempting to many a convalescent, although their food value is slightly overrated.

By casting a glance every day at the poulterer's counter you are sure to pick up great bargains from time to time. During the first month of the War I have seen rabbits, poultry and grouse at such low prices that they have often been cheaper than mutton and beef. Probably we must expect a great shrinkage in the imports of the frozen and rather tasteless game birds from the East ; but, on the other hand, English **game birds** may be cheap, as thousands of brace which would have been shot to give away will drift into the market. One may express the hope that **venison** will also come into its own again during the War. Provided that people will get away from the loathsome superstition that venison must be outrageously high

before it is fit to eat, the national larder can be enriched to a great extent with this meat. A haunch of venison with a purée of chestnuts, some diamonds of scarlet runners, and a little red-currant jelly will make a meal full of old-world charm and often twenty per cent. cheaper than an equally ample repast of mutton or beef or veal. Indeed the whole question of venison cookery, which would require a book as large as this for its proper discussion, is well worth going into, and every housekeeper should risk a few experiments.

The poulterer, when he plucks and cleans and trusses a bird for you, ought not to keep the liver and the giblets. Indeed, by watching every point, you may find birds almost the most economical food you can buy. I bought a brace of black game the other day for three shillings and threepence. They served six persons on two nights—first as a roast and second as a salmis, and I made some soup from them the third day.

Under the ugly name of **the greengrocer** there is in every town and suburb a man who buys and sells the most beautiful of all our foodstuffs. Nobody will claim that a butcher's is a gallery of pictures or that fish out of water provoke gaiety. But a well-stocked greengrocer's is a thing of beauty and a joy until closing time. Apples as rosy as the cheek of a country wench, peaches with a bloom that the most exquisite dame must envy, grapes like great beads of amber, and oranges and lemons like a windfall of tiny suns and moons keep company with scarlet tomatoes,

with yellow bananas, with purple beets and with every shape and size and hue of leafage and rootage.

It would be an exaggeration to say that greengrocers without exception have lived up to the splendours of their wares ; nor does it often transpire that they are poets and painters in their scanty leisure. Until the twentieth century came in, the vegetable shop was generally an unlovely place. At the top of the scale there were a few vegetable dealers whose stocks were well kept and well shown ; but one had to pay what might be called florists' prices, as if everything had been grown under glass or imported in tissue paper and cotton-wool. Things have changed for the better. Many greengrocers, whose prices are almost as low as the lowest, make a point of dressing their fronts with so much richness and abundance that one is thrilled as by the sight of a huge cornucopia outpoured. The interior of the shop cannot be as spotless as a high-class dairy, because earth is always being liberated from tubers and soiled leaves are constantly being torn from greens. Still, a well-managed greengrocer's ought to be pleasant both outside and inside. When it is found to be slovenly, a housekeeper will usually be safe in leaving it alone. She should beware, however, of expecting the standard of the fruit and vegetable tents at a big flower show. Prize exhibits are beautiful to look at, but they are often second-rate when one tries to eat them. If the greengrocer should cleanse away every speck of Mother Earth from his turnips and horse-radishes and potatoes, he would have to raise his prices, and at the same time he would

rob the stuff of a coat which protects it from the many contaminations of street air.

Vegetables need and will repay a lifelong course of close observation. Some cooks will calmly ask for so many carrots and so many turnips to compound a certain stew, as if carrots and turnips are as unalterable as half bricks. Yet there is a world of difference between one carrot and another carrot, one turnip and another turnip. Some turnips might almost have been turned by a lathe out of white wood, and some carrots are limp, with a colour more yellow than red. And these remarks apply to all other vegetables in greater or less degree. It follows that the recipes in cookery-books are often no more than indications of an ideal, and that they must be modified in practice according to the stronger or weaker flavours, the more tough or more tender fibres of the ingredients. Again, a point is reached in the growth of most vegetables when they become unpleasant. French beans and scarlet runners are sometimes sold in a state which no reasonable amount of boiling can correct, and radishes are still marketed when all their briskness has given place to a faded flabbiness. The less honest or less able greengrocer stocks his shop with stuff that his colleagues will not touch.

In some parts of London one comes upon what looks like a row of costers' barrows but is really an open-air fruit market. If any reader of this book should visit Soho to buy a casserole, as already advised, it would not be a waste of time to walk along Little Pulteney Street, which runs westward from Wardour Street. On Fridays and Saturdays especi-

ally the fruit and vegetable market is a wonderful sight. Those who are willing to put on old clothes, and to leave all airs and graces at home, will be recompensed for any ungentle little hustlings and jostlings. One must be a bit of a linguist, a working acquaintance with the Cockney language being almost essential. And one must muzzle one's sense of the ridiculous. A few months ago I used to buy in this street enormous grape-fruits, of a ripeness and flavour unknown to me elsewhere. I paid on an average three-halfpence each. When cut in half and properly prepared, each fruit was enough for two persons. Unhappily, however, I tried to do the proprietor of the barrow a good turn by pointing out the defects in his placard, which read :

GRAIPE FRUIT THE ONLY FRUIT IN THE WORLD CONTANING 150 PER SENT OF QUININE

Whether the scribe thought that I was going to indict him under the Food and Drugs' Act I cannot say, but he flew into a hot rage and challenged me to produce the man or woman or babe unborn that had ever known him acting not straight or fair. I have also learnt, as soon as I see grand globe artichokes in Little Pulteney Street at tenpence a dozen, to buy them without a smile when the proprietor commends them as "These 'ere chokes," and to be equally discreet when, in the asparagus season, I receive sporting offers of "Grass." The barrows are a guide to the

waxing and waning of seasons. When a given fruit or vegetable has passed its hey-day, it disappears entirely. And yet many exotics find their way into this unlovely thoroughfare, where I have bought beautiful boxes of fresh purple figs and mandarins for sixpence the box of two or three dozen. Pine-apples are also to be found, though not so abundantly as one might expect. When a pine-apple is full-ripe and even shows in one spot an over-maturity which would spoil it for a West End fruiterer's window, it is at its best for immediate eating. I shall explain in the proper place a way of serving it. Still, we ought to trade with our local greengrocer as a rule, so long as he behaves himself. The man with the barrow pays no rates or rent. He would fall dead at the mere suggestion of paying income tax, although he is often rich enough to buy up two or three men who pay it regularly. Besides, the local man is at hand for our convenience in wet weather or fine, and this ought not to be forgotten.

One of the greatest mistakes of the ordinary house-keeper, from the point of view of the gourmet, and one of the chief reasons for the expensiveness of her housekeeping, is **the habit of visiting the greengrocer last** when marketing. Nearly every English cook chooses the meat first and the vegetables afterwards—hardly ever the vegetables first and the meat to suit it. I think this is one more sound explanation of the monotony of English menus, and I recommend an occasional reversal of the order. By going now and then to **the greengrocer first** one will start a new train of ideas.

For instance, there are days when **small white cab-**

bages are at their best and cheapest, and the sight of them might well suggest cabbages cunningly stuffed, one for each person. Again, one's eye sometimes encounters a new-dug pile of **Jerusalem artichokes**. [These very cheap tubers are certainly not artichokes, and they have no connection with Jerusalem, their English name being corrupted from *girasol* which means that the plants try to turn themselves towards the sun.] With the good and sound Jerusalem artichokes a cook makes a **Crème Palestine** ; and a dinner which begins with Crème Palestine must be so carefully thought out, with a view to a proper sequence and contrast of colours and textures and flavours, that all the other buying for the day may turn on this pivot. Occasionally there is an abundance of fresh mushrooms at a low price, and, when this happens, a cook will not neglect her opportunity.

Another shopman whom we must visit now and then calls himself rather arrogantly the **Provision Merchant**. He sells Cheshire cheese and York ham and Irish bacon and new-laid eggs "from his own farm," as well as some cheese and ham and bacon and eggs which have made rather longer journeys. In these days he is constantly adding other "lines," such as poultry, New Zealand lamb, tinned fish, and jam. He is also adopting, in many cases when he ought to know better, undignified methods of pushing the sale of "overweight" nut butter and margarine, a pound and a half being sold at the price of a pound, with perhaps an aluminium butter-knife thrown in. In his Cheddar cheese department there are often clear

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proofs that he is an Imperialist, free from parish-pump narrowness, and that he feels bound to encourage the nascent agriculture of Canada and our other great dominions overseas. Happily, some of his tribe carry on their business honourably, and when these are found their customers will naturally stick to them.

The good provision merchant generally prefers a quiet window, furnished with a stack of flitches of bacon and a few cheeses ; but his baser rival loves a garish front and is usually trumpeting some coupon-scheme so as to reconcile you to his coarse sardines and rank tea.

Of the twentieth-century **grocer** it is hard to speak with brotherly love. At one time the *épiciier* (or "spicer"), as the French call him, was something of an artist. With the peculiarities of the local water supply before him, he blended tea so sensitively that no packet tea would have had a chance against it. He received many of his materials in the rough and in the unready. Turning a great wheel adorned with gilded lions or dragons, his apprentices cut loaves of sugar in cubes, while the sons of bishops and the nephews of admirals stared in through the window and bitterly cursed the hard fate which had caused them to be born too high in the social scale. The grocer had blue and white jars, and lacquered boxes, and baby drawers, and scoops big and little. As you looked at his stock it was hard to believe that it had not been brought to him in an argosy or on pack-mules. To-day's grocer is not out of the same batch. All that his young men know of the particular packet of

jar or tin can which they are selling is that it is "eleven three farthings"; that the packers are splendid people; that they are selling quite a lot of it; and that they have another kind at "ten and a half." This sort of young man has memorised a price-list; but instead of having all the seas and orchards and spice gardens and cornfields of the world before his eyes, his mental picture gallery is furnished with nothing but labels and show cards.

In some books on housekeeping it is recommended that one ought to search out the grocers who still do their work in the old way, and some trustful young matrons therefore patronise none but shops with nice placards concerning "Our own blend." A few genuine old grocers' shops survive which may be almost infallibly distinguished by their atmosphere when one is not guided to them by their reputation. But most of the "Own blend" shops are delusions. Most of them. Not all. The exceptional grocers who put skill and conscience into the choice of their **own brands** (even though they may do the actual buying and blending and packing by proxy) give the best value in the world. The proof is in the eating and drinking; and when a tradesman of this kind has convinced you that he is a man of brains and character you ought, as I have advised in the foregoing pages, to trust him and to make use of his experience.

There is one kind of grocer from whom I have never obtained, and never expect to obtain, any satisfaction. I refer to the kind of man who seems to revel in ugliness. When "a new neighbourhood," as he would call it, is opened up by the speculative builder, this kind of grocer-man is one of the first to arrive upon

the scene. His chosen pitch may be close to an old grey bridge or a timber cottage or a grand grove of elms ; but this makes no difference. Up go his yellow bricks and his blue slates, and in goes his sheet of plate glass, behind which he is yearning to show pyramids of orange-coloured cartons, tomato tins labelled in flaming scarlet, and show cards with skim-milk-white letters on backgrounds of the most odious royal blue. If a man should propose to preoccupy the same bit of ground with a whitewashed inn, where nut-brown ale and brown bread and honest cheese would be sold to the pleasant swinging of a signboard with a running horse on it, he would not be allowed to move an inch without the permission of the Bench. Surely there ought to be some sort of a Bench to **license the grocer** and to see that he neither disfigures the landscape nor poisons the inhabitants. More often than not these shops—I beg their pardon, these “ stores ”—are stocked with “ lines ” chosen merely as “ sellers ” at the very lowest prices. When there has been no other grocer to turn to, I have sometimes bought stuff at these places. The proprietors generally exhibit a certain proportion of well-known brands, partly because some of their customers insist on these and partly to make a respectable show, but they are always endeavouring to sell the **just as good**. Fortunately the “ just as good ” has to conform to the law, and I have often found words in small type on the labels which have been useful as clues to the nature of the shop. The strawberry jam is made from the choicest Kent strawberries (large type) “ improved ” (small type) with “ other choice fruits.” The mustard turns out to be “ blended with the choicest farine,”

and so on, until one gets the impression that if it were not for the Food and Drugs Act hardly an honest article would cross the counter. The poor are cruelly imposed upon at this kind of shop. To save a penny in the shilling they let themselves be cheated out of threepence, and, in some cases, they get deleterious ingredients into the bargain. Even educated housewives often fail to read labels and to use common-sense. I have seen baking powders and vinegars which might have been the deadly inventions of German spies improving on the slow old process of poisoning the wells. Fortunately, however, demand governs supply, and there are so many sensible women who will not be put off with shams and rubbish that it is possible nearly everywhere to find a grocery stocked with good things. Indeed I have heard a grocer say quite cynically that he had tried both methods and that honesty was the only paying policy for a high-class trade.

A housekeeper, having found the best shop, should often **visit it herself**. All kinds of new imports keep coming along, as well as all kinds of new sauces and materials for sweets and savouries. As she walks about the shop, waiting for change or for some information, many a notion will strike the resourceful cook. Forgotten stores in her own pantry come back to her mind, or she remembers once favourite dishes which she has somehow ceased to serve. It is for some such reason as this that I have never myself felt quite happy in dealing with the huge Stores. As soon as a housekeeper finally loses all patience with small and personally-managed local shops, and decides to order everything by telephone or post card from the

Stores, she saves herself many little worries, but cuts herself off from **all-alive housekeeping** and drifts nine times out of ten into the monotony which is the chief defect of our English cuisine.

The **baker** follows a calling of exceeding dignity. In London and our greater towns hardly anybody kneads and bakes in her own house to-day. It is through the baker that we can eat each day our daily bread, and it would be ungenerous to deny that he often does his best. While millers and bakers are not always as white as they are dusted, I think their inner blackness has been exaggerated, and that few of them spend the silent night in adding chalk to the flour and sand to the household bread. But while there are not vast numbers of knaves among them, it must be admitted that they **do not all bake well**. Should any reader of this book be so unlucky as to live in a place without a good baker, I urge her not to sit down too meekly under the loss. Good bread is of such obvious importance that I must almost apologise for saying so. Where good household bread is not to be got, let the housewife try to get into touch with somebody who supplies yeast, and let her set about that hard but honourable task which will fill her soul with just pride and her cupboard with honest loaves. Failing yeast, one can fall back on German barm—which, by the way, is not all made in Germany. Failing the barm, the chemist must be asked for three ounces of bicarbonate of soda and two ounces of tartaric acid, which must be well mixed in three ounces of ordinary arrowroot. If kept dry this baking

powder will be found all that is desirable, and it will enable any careful cook to turn out wholesome bread. Such bread should be made of a mixture of four parts of wheat meal (not too coarse) to one part of fine flour. Suppose you are using two pounds of the mixture. Along with a heaped tablespoonful of baking powder and a little salt there ought to be about two ounces of butter. Use either milk and water or milk alone to make an almost liquid dough which should be baked in very shallow round tins not much more than an inch high. The baking powder (like a Seidlitz powder) generates innumerable little bubbles which give lightness to the bread. It is essential therefore to begin the baking in a hot oven, so that the outside of the flat loaf or cake may be sealed hard, thus imprisoning the bubbles. [Although it is nothing to do with bakers or baking, I will say in this place that the principle of **sealing** applies to grilling also, and indeed to many actions in cookery.]

The foregoing directions are borrowed from Sir Henry Thompson, with one addition. The otherwise admirable Sir Henry does not appear to have been a practical cook, and he therefore wrote: "Mix with a sufficient quantity of baking powder." Such vague expressions as "a sufficient quantity" are the despair of the novice. I admit that, in the following chapters, I shall often use vague language myself, but only as regards seasonings, and degrees of richness, or in connection with materials which (unlike our baking powder) are of varying strength.

In buying flour from the baker it is a good thing to tell him quite candidly what you do and do not want. The much-despised **finest white flour** still has many

uses in the kitchen, despite its low nutritive value ; but for your bread you require such flour as used to be called **seconds** and is now more generally spoken of under the names of "standard" and "household." The finest oatmeal, and other flours not ground from wheat, are important ; but they can only be used confidently after several experiments.

In our own day and generation bread is too often wasted. Years ago an almost religious reverence surrounded bread. You could waste other things ; but never bread. My own childhood was embittered as the result of my having thrown away in a moment of petulance a horrible slice of bread, with crust burnt almost black and a doughy crumb. My brothers and sisters could throw away apples over the hedge after sampling them with a single bite ; or they could leave half-a-slice of roast sirloin on the plate, with impunity ; but my sin in throwing away that piece of bread was never allowed to die. When an old Welsh nurse called to see me after a few years of absence one of her first questions was directed to this hateful subject, and she did not go away without telling me a blood-chilling narrative about a boy who threw away a piece of bread and perished miserably a few months afterwards, on a raft in the Indian Ocean, without so much as a ship's biscuit. Nevertheless I do not wholly succeed in despising this old sentiment. Bread, quite apart from its high use in the Christian mysteries, has a human sanctity as the stoutest staff of life. To waste it at any time is not good. To waste it in war-time is an unspiritual as well as a selfish action. François Coppée brought out this feeling very beautifully in his little story of the siege of Paris called : "A

Morsel of Bread.” We do not expect a siege of London, but let us take our bread-pans seriously all the same. It is far better to calculate the bread consumption beforehand than to find the bowl littered with fragments which have to be worked off by some of the worst makeshifts of cookery. In many houses the surplus bread is got rid of in the form of bread-and-butter pudding. In denouncing bread-and-butter pudding I know that I shall fall foul of many people, including those who have lately been advertising the currant trade. But bread-and-butter pudding, and soups in which there is a whole slice of soddened bread, present a serious danger. Those who eat them, especially children, are prone to bolt such soft food without proper mastication. Now it is an established fact that starchy substances like bread must be well worked (salivated) in the mouth before they are swallowed. From some points of view it is less dangerous to bolt small lumps of beef or mutton than equal lumps of cake or bread. A bread-and-butter pudding, made with currants that are not too skinny and with good milk, can be a valuable diet to the few who will eat it properly ; but it is generally better to avoid the need for making it by a more jealous watch over the buying of bread. There will be an overplus sometimes ; and then the breadcrumb is best used in a steamed suet pudding where it is lighter than flour. Flavoured with marmalade, or ginger, or chocolate, such puddings are good.

The **dairyman** is hedged about with legal enactments which ought to keep him straight. The law,

however, allows him a certain amount of elbow-room as regards the minimum of solids in milk, so as to protect him in the event of his receiving in good faith an unusually poor milk from the farmer. The baser sort of dairyman always waters down the milk to this minimum, while the better sort gives his customers a far purer article, with more cream, at the same price per quart. Milk, like bread, is often bought wastefully. Still, some waste is bound to occur in houses where daily habits are not absolutely regular. As the milkman is early astir with a fast white horse and great brass milk-cans, shining in the early sunshine like burnished helmets, he must be able to depend upon a certain regular round of customers. Thus it would not be fair to thrust one's head out of the bathroom window once or twice a week and to countermand the little standing order. Even when the mistress of a tiny household suddenly decides that she and her consort will drink China tea instead of *café au lait*, it is she and not the milkman who ought to find a way of disposing of the unwanted pint of milk. In too many houses it is placed aside, and when the cream has been skimmed from it a few hours later it is allowed to go sour. Sour milk can be used for certain kinds of hot cakes ; but this disposes of very small quantities only. It is therefore far better to use any surplus milk while it is sweet. A good rice pudding with or without stewed fruit or preserve is excellent home food. Milk is also wanted for so many soups and sauces that not a drop of it need be lost.

Happy is the housewife who never has a disappoint-

ment with her **butter** and her **eggs**. I shall not attempt to offer her much more than my sympathy and good wishes. But perhaps I may say that slightly salted butter is often better value than any other. Some of the cooking butters at about a shilling a pound are not cheap in the long run ; indeed the best professional cooks have been known to say that they find it more economical to buy cooking butter at a higher price than the ordinary fresh dairy butter, which they make into little pats for the table. This remark, however, applies more to classical dishes than to the kind of cookery contemplated throughout this book.

Butter should be bought in small quantities. I have used various patent contrivances for keeping it sweet in hot weather, and have found them good in theory, especially one which sucks up cold water into a muslin cover ; but **day-by-day buying** is the best plan. It goes without saying that, even when it is kept in a larder for not more than a few hours, butter should not be placed near any foods which smell strongly.

Intelligent and well-reared people tell me that the best makes of **margarine** are so much better than their predecessors that they can be used for nearly all the purposes of dairy butter. My own experience has been less fortunate, but, if the North Sea should have to be closed to Danish and Scandinavian vessels by reason of further German mine-laying, it might become necessary for most of us to give margarine another trial. I am referring to its use for cut bread and butter and for dishes served in butter newly melted, where margarine may fail horribly. Meanwhile, however, every housewife ought to be using in ordinary cookery the **vegetable butters** which are

no dearer than lard and are less objectionable in several respects. I used to buy a butter of this kind from Marseilles, which was as white as driven snow. It seems to be no longer generally sold in England ; but there are British brands, such as cocoanut butters, which any first-class grocer can supply.

Eggs are eggs, according to an inscrutable proverb. Why the egg should have been thus chosen to express fixity and certainty I cannot guess : because eggs were deceivers ever. "New laid " may mean laid this morning or laid last Saturday week. "Fresh " means in most shops an egg not fresh enough to be basketed with the oldest of the "new laid." And even when the question of age has been decided it does not follow that two lots of eggs, both laid on the same day, ought to be sold at the same price. Buy three separate dozens of new-laid eggs at three separate shops, paying the same money at each, and weigh your purchases at home. You may find that you have obtained three or four pennyworth more egg-value at the best shop than at the worst.

The many **substitutes for eggs** are useful when custards have to be provided cheaply in large quantities for healthy and hungry children. But if you have a wounded or convalescent soldier in the house, of course you will not use these things. Speaking for myself, I have never found anything else to do the work of an egg ; and when eggs are too dear it is better to abandon all dishes in which they have to be used freely.

In thousands of houses breakfast eggs are still cooked in boiling water. They are easier to digest and better to eat if they are laid in **cold water** and

brought gradually to the boiling point. One or two experiments (which will need modifying according to the age and size of the egg) will soon teach you how many seconds the egg should be left in the water after it has begun to boil and bubble.

So much for **Going to Market**. The chapter would have been shorter if I had not paused here and there to give hints for cooking rather than for shopping : but I have noticed that remarks made in passing are remembered when formal recipes are forgotten.

CHAPTER IV

HORS D'ŒUVRE

WHEN he heard that there was to be a chapter in it on **hors d'œuvre**, a kind friend who has been telling me how not to write this book completely lost his patience. He appeared to think that hors d'œuvre in war-time were about as decent as nigger minstrels at a funeral. As others will share his feeling, I take leave to relate at this stage a Moral Tale.

About twelve years ago the two nephews of a worthy couple in Shropshire were married in the same month to the two maidens of their choice. Although these were not their names, I will say that Reginald married Janet and that Wilfred married Dorothy. Both young couples established their Earthly Paradises in London, whither the Worthy Couple came to visit them every spring. Janet's house was solidly and sombrely furnished with "everything good." And "everything good" was the governing motto of Janet's table. Her soups were so strongly prepared from gravy-beef that they took away your appetite for the rest of the dinner ; which was a serious matter, as the dishes which followed were all equally "good," while the brown sherry and almost black Burgundy were chosen to match. Dorothy's house, on the other hand, was light and bright. When she

was trotting about the town furnishing it, this lively damsel shocked more than one tradesman by telling him that the articles which would "last a lifetime" were just what she didn't want. Dorothy spent less than half as much as Janet at the outset, and kept a tidy sum in the bank against the day when she would get sick of some of her chairs and tables.

It was noticed that the Worthy Couple invariably found their sojourn with Janet something of a trial, and that they generally produced a pretext for migrating to Dorothy's about the middle of the second week. During their stay at Dorothy's they even seemed to become a little younger. Yet somehow the Worthy Couple, when they returned to Shropshire, always expressed satisfaction with Janet and some uneasiness in regard to Dorothy. They were persuaded that Janet and her husband would never give them a moment's anxiety; but they seemed to be inwardly convinced that Dorothy and Wilfrid were on the paths which lead slowly to the two disreputable Courts of Bankruptcy and Divorce. I once made bold to ask the better half of the Worthy Couple (during the absence of the worse half) for light upon this curious situation. I learned that Janet (who, to my certain knowledge, is an unpunctual and unhappy and dull and useless lady) was "always so sensible and reliable," while Dorothy (whom I know to be a woman who gets through an enormous amount of her own and other people's work without fuss) was "awfully nice but such a butterfly." When I expressed surprise, I was given an illustration of Dorothy's flippancy and extravagance. It appeared that the Worthy Couple had lately dined at Dorothy's house and had

enjoyed themselves as usual. They had protested, however, against so much kind fuss being made in honour of their visit, and had especially deplored the troublesome though delicious *hors d'œuvre* ; where-upon Dorothy had instantly retorted : " We have *hors d'œuvre* every night except Sunday."

I took it upon myself to argue that Dorothy's gay little dinners, so full of pleasant and wholesome variety, with their accompaniment of well-bought and well-served cheap and brisk wines, must certainly cost Dorothy much less than she would have to spend on giving such dinners as Janet's. But my words were vain, and I was made to feel that it was not quite nice for a mere man to pretend to understand housekeeping and cookery. When the Worthy Couple died (with faithful unanimity) a year or two later, they left £11,000 to the Janet household and £1000 to Dorothy and her husband ; having previously explained to their solicitor that they hated to make such a distinction, but that it would be more harmful than kind to leave money where it would only be frittered away.

To the shallow and unthinking this Moral Tale may seem to show that if we eschew *hors d'œuvre* we may be thousands of pounds in pocket. The true moral, however, will be plain enough to ninety-nine readers out of a hundred. What shall it profit a Janet or any other woman to inherit a lot of money and lead a dismal and dyspeptic life ? And what shall a Dorothy or any other woman give in exchange for her soul ?

My tale about *hors d'œuvre* is to be taken as itself

a kind of hors d'œuvre, ushering in this and my remaining chapters. The point is that Dorothy's hors d'œuvre cost her practically nothing. If she had found the recipes in a cookery-book and had bought the ingredients expressly they would have cost her perhaps two or three shillings; but, although they were good and looked almost extravagant, they added nothing to her expenses as a hostess. Every one of them was what might be called a by-product of the general housekeeping. Besides, knowing that the hors d'œuvre would be enjoyed, this clever hostess provided fish and meat a little more sparingly and thus saved the cost of the condiments and butter in the hors d'œuvre. In short, she worked upon the principles which were laid down in an earlier chapter of this book as the foundation of economical housekeeping both in peace-time and in war-time—the great principles of **using what you have rather than what you haven't** and of **working from the market to the menu rather than from the menu to the market.**

Hors d'œuvre, while helping a housewife to save, will also take the sting out of the economies. I have noticed scores of times the pleasure and eagerness with which English people fall upon the hors d'œuvre when they go to lunch or dine at a fixed-price restaurant; yet the same people rarely eat such things in their own homes. After the War we shall be more friendly than ever with the Russians and the French—two peoples who understand hors d'œuvre thoroughly—and we might as well begin to adopt their best practices at once.

It has been explained in earlier passages that this book is not a substitute for the ordinary cookery-books wherein scores of *hors d'œuvre* are described. I shall therefore give about half-a-dozen recipes only, every one of which presupposes the existence of small portions of **left-over** food in the larder. The first shall be **Cucumber Cups**. Perhaps you had on Friday some salmon and cucumber. You did not cut up and serve the whole of the cucumber there and then, but you left half of it—the half with the stalk end—standing point downwards in a jar of water. On Saturday you could take this remaining half and, having peeled it, you could cut it into a few sections, the shape of drums. That is to say, instead of cutting a piece of cucumber five inches long into forty or fifty thin slices, you cut it into four or five pieces only. By standing up these drum-shaped sections, after steaming them until they are tender without being sloppy, it is easy to scoop out the seeds and to bevel the apertures to the shape of a cup or a funnel. The next step is to apply our great principle of using what you have rather than of buying something especially to complete the dish. For example, if a little of the Friday salmon remains, it can be mixed with some mayonnaise and laid inside the cucumber. Or some tiny pieces of chicken, too tiny for any other purpose, can be similarly mixed with mayonnaise and put in the cups. Or some of the potted fish already recommended will do. Set the cups aside and serve them quite cold.

As you will not want to turn every half-cucumber

you may have into cucumber cups, or as you may sometimes lack fish or chicken to put inside, you must learn how to serve simple slices of cucumber in such a way that they will be found digestible even by people who are generally afraid of this cooling vegetable.

Having peeled and sliced your cucumber, lay the slices in a saucer with a sprinkling of salt and let them stand until a good brine has formed. Pour away this brine, and with it you will get rid of the elements that are injurious. Pepper the slices. Do not salt them again. Pour over them some pure olive oil and turn them over and over in it. Just before serving, add a little good vinegar and turn them over and over again.

On a day of abstinence, you can make a fine show with salads in this manner. Fully ripe but still firm **tomatoes** can be neatly sliced with a sharp knife and served with pepper, salt, oil and vinegar; but in this case the dressing should be well mixed together in a cup and poured over the slices of tomato, which would break up into an unattractive mess if you tried to turn them over in the oil and vinegar. **Cold French beans** are excellent in this style, but the proportion of vinegar should be rather greater than in most other salads. Neat sprigs of **cold boiled cauliflower** can be served in the same way, though it is better to keep a fairly large piece of the cauliflower unbroken and to cover it with mayonnaise. To extend your colour scheme, you can make also a **salad of beetroot**. To do this you cut a boiled beet into small dice, sprinkle a little chopped parsley over it, and add a mixture of three parts of oil to two of

vinegar. Many people add a few fragments from fillets of herring and also a finely chopped onion to this salad, but it must be remembered that raw onion cannot be offered to everybody. I ought to add that a beetroot salad is said to be a little fattening and gouty, by reason of the sugar in the beet and the oil in the dressing, but there are no bad effects unless it is devoured excessively. If you do not eat all these salad hors d'œuvre at one meal, they can be mixed together (adding the tomato last) with any large pieces of cold steamed fish, or with little squares cut from a ham or a sirloin which has already been carved down almost to the bone, or with pieces (not too large) from such cheap cold meats as the flank and brisket mentioned on a preceding page. A few slices of cold potato, which must be kept in shape like the tomato, ought to be added to the salad when pieces of meat are in it. This combination salad, however, although made from your hors d'œuvre (which in their own turn were made from your cold vegetables) is not itself to be served as hors d'œuvre, because it will be big and important enough for the central dish in a famify luncheon on any warm day.

Although I have bewailed the dearness of eggs, I shall not be deemed extravagant if I try to suggest two simple and picturesque hors d'œuvre which will require only one egg for the pair. Boil the egg hard. Shell it carefully, cut it open lengthwise and pound up the yolk with good butter (softened on the stove) und with a little good essence of anchovies, or anchovy sauce, which I assume you keep in the house

to serve with the more insipid kinds of fish. This anchovy paste or butter can be made so mild that it will do for afternoon-tea sandwiches and will delight the many ladies who hate ordinary anchovies and look upon them as a man's taste. For use as hors d'œuvre the paste can be served in a dozen ways or it can be held back for a savoury. And now for the other hors d'œuvre. I said a few lines back that the hard-boiled egg should be neatly shelled and cut open lengthwise, so that when the yolk has been taken out the two halves will be like **two little boats**. The boats can be filled with any tasty tit-bits which you may have on hand. You can chop up a gherkin from the pickle bottle and combine it with potted fish or potted meat. If you have in the house some of the cheap sheets of rice-paper which are used for the bottom of a cake, you can place a little mast upright in the middle of the laden boat, with a square inch of rice-paper for a sail. You prick sharply two tiny holes in the rice-paper and thread through them a mast cut from a wooden match or broken off from a piece of spaghetti. This hors d'œuvre fascinates children, whom it is our duty to amuse occasionally even in times of war when we may feel disinclined to do so.

Against the day when we may be receiving convalescent soldiers into our homes, every cook ought to know how to make old-fashioned calf's-foot jelly, and when it is about to be made, there will be a chance of varying her hors d'œuvre with a **salade de pied de veau**. In the same category I may mention a **salade**

de museau de bœuf. This sounds better in French than in English, as an ox-cheek was thought vulgar as long ago as the day when Goldsmith's incomparable Mr Tibbs invited a lord to dinner. Ox-cheek, however, after being cooked tender, will furnish a good little dish, with oil and vinegar. I ought to say at this stage that the oft-despised gelatinous parts of the ox and the calf have value as food.

Should a **cold sausage** exist in your pantry you may cut it into small drums and garnish the top of each drum with a neat little dab of horse-radish cream or apple chutney. And fragments of **cold boiled ham** can be rolled into the shape of cornettes, having been first lightly touched inside with a smear of mustard into which you have put a few drops of vinegar.

So much for hors d'œuvre worked up from odds and ends. In war-time, however, it may often suit a housekeeper to amplify the hors d'œuvre and to omit soup and fish, so as to go straight on to a good ragoût or navarin, which, when followed by some fresh fruit and a little cheese, would make a good enough meal for anybody. On such occasions quite a large quantity of hors d'œuvre can be provided without much expense. I sometimes take an ordinary dinner-plate (or, better still, a white plaque which is slightly concave and has no brim) and upon it I arrange a dozen or two of the very cheap little fish known as Norwegian **smoked sardines**. I arrange them after the pattern of a rimless wheel, with the tails of the fish meeting

and touching in a ring at the hub and with the shoulders pointing towards the circumference. This wheel of fish has a handsome and important appearance. Should some of the sardines be left uneaten, they should be laid at the bottom of a soup-plate and covered with their own or any other good oil.

A tin of **filets d'hareng** is useful. A little oil will preserve the contents a long time after it has been opened.

Two dishes of **olives**, green and black, are worth more than the money they cost. I have often been told that they soon dry up, but this difficulty is got over by keeping them in salted water and by buying them in small quantities only. Olives are not only delightful cleansers of the palate but they lend themselves to many uses. Every housekeeper should learn to **turn an olive**—that is to say, how to remove the stone. You cut off a small piece from the stalk end, so that the olive can stand upright. Then, taking a penknife with a narrow blade and a sharp point, you begin to peel the olive, pretty much as you would peel an apple, so as to disengage the stone. You should learn to “turn” the olive in about three folds of the spiral. If you have done the job properly, the olive will resume its shape after the stone comes away, and you can stuff it with a rolled fillet of anchovy or with anything else that is suitable.

Salted nuts are nearly always popular and, when consumed in moderation, they are a valuable addition to a prudent dietary. It is better to salt your own

nuts than to buy them ready-made in a shop. Blanch your **almonds**, or whatever the nuts may be, and dry them well. Pour about a dessertspoonful of fine olive oil into a perfectly clean baking-tin and see that the oil spreads itself out evenly. Lay the blanched kernels in the tin and put them in a fairly hot oven. Turn them over several times until they take a pleasant brown hue. Turn them out upon a sheet of white paper (to absorb the oil) and dust them over with perfectly dry table-salt. So long as you protect them from damp, they will keep a long time in a tin box or a stoppered bottle. When **Brazil nuts** are at their best, from March to September, I prepare them in a similar manner. With a little practice, Brazil nuts can be cracked without breaking the kernel. After the blanching, I cut fine white slices with a sharp knife and submit them to the process of browning and salting already described. Such hors d'œuvre as stuffed olives and salted Brazil nuts will strike many people as wickedly extravagant luxuries, but they are really cheaper than many less nutritious and more commonplace foods.

A plate of **radishes** looks well and is good for our health. It is a pity to trim the radishes more than is necessary, as the colours of their roots and leaves are large parts of their charm. Tiny pats of butter ought to accompany them. For a few pence one can buy a plated tool which, after a dip in hot water, enables even a child to make pats of butter in the pretty shell-shape of the great restaurants.

Speaking with bated breath, I must record the

indisputable fact that a dish of the youngest spring **onions** goes very well with radishes. At the same time I admit that there are still polite circles where raw onions must not be named. So here is a way of presenting onions in such a manner that they will lose all their disadvantages while keeping nearly all their attractions. Take a fire-proof dish and put in it a mixture of oil and vinegar with such herbs as you may possess. Bring the oil and vinegar to boiling point. Then lay in the dish some fine round onions—the small kind, such as one uses with chickens cooked in a casserole. These onions ought not to be more than an inch in diameter. Of course their outside skins are removed before you cook them. Maintain the contents of the dish at boiling point for a minute or two ; then draw it to the side of the fire or put it over the smallest possible jet of gas and keep it simmering. No exact time for the whole operation can be given, as some onions are tougher than others. Indeed, a tough onion may require the adding of a little water to the vinegar and oil. As soon as the onions are tender, transfer the contents of the fire-proof dish to a glass bowl, oil and vinegar and all, and let the onions become quite cold. The next day they will be delicious. I have seen a woman who has a horror of onions take three helpings from this dish of hors d'œuvre. Onions thus cooked will keep three or four days in the liquor.

This little book will have failed of its object if it does not stimulate readers to invent hors d'œuvre and other dishes of their own. So we will pass on.

But before doing so I must point out that the hors d'œuvre in this chapter would displease professional cooks and restaurateurs for a very simple reason. In the regular cookery-books hors d'œuvre are defined as dainty little snacks to **whet the appetite**. They are, in the world of solids, what apéritifs are in the world of liquids. But, as this is not a book for the pampering of great people, I have preferred to describe those hors d'œuvre which do not whet appetites but satisfy them. I could write a good deal about **canapés**, and smoked salmon from the Lurlei rock, and about caviare, and plovers' eggs; but these prescriptions must be reserved for another book on "Home Cookery in the Time of Victory."

CHAPTER V

SOUPS

NOT everyone who buys this book will read it through from the first page to the last. Despite the warning in the preface, some will take it from the shelf, and open it at this chapter or that, in order to find the sum-total of human wisdom on the matter to which the chapter-heading refers. I am therefore compelled to repeat over and over again that this little volume is **not a substitute for the** more orderly and **detailed cookery-book**. It is in the nature of a tract, recalling indifferent cooks who have lapsed from grace to the more fervid practice of their high calling, and stirring up those who have never cooked to begin cooking now.

My most important paragraph about soups will not contain a recipe. It will be, and hereby is, an entreaty to take down a good cookery-book and to run rapidly through the chapter on soups. Let this quick perusal be made pencil in hand and let **the likely soups** be marked with a cross. By the likely I mean those which are easily prepared from accessible, fresh, inexpensive, nutritious and appetising materials. For example, a cook who reads all about soups in October will not mark as a matter of urgency a soup which can be made only with fresh green peas. Nor will a wise cook grow excited over a plan for using

lentils or split peas or dried haricot beans at a time when the markets are overflowing with artichokes, carrots, cauliflower, sorrel, cress, leeks, lettuce, celery and turnips. Most cookery-books contain recipes for hundreds of concoctions which you would never dream of making, just as most bookshops contain hundreds of books which you would never dream of reading. Get into your mind the comparatively small number of timely and practicable soups. Then, instead of deciding that you will immediately set about making a particular soup irrespective of its convenience, look round your pantry or set out for the market. If the pantry, for instance, should contain the remains of a chicken, your way is plain. If, however, the cupboard is bare and you find at the greengrocer's shop that fine cauliflowers are unusually cheap, there will flash into your mind the recipe for a **Crème Dubarry**. Or you may remember that you have some cream to spare, skimmed from a surplus of the morning's milk, in which event it will be easy to make a very healthy and satisfying **sorrel soup** or a **Crème de Santé**. [At a house near Hampstead, where the garden is not much bigger than the dining-room, I once had the pleasure of finding enough sorrel to make a Crème de Santé which was more than a success.] Perhaps you have been boiling a fish, and you have some fish stock which you do not know what to do with. By shredding up about half-a-pound of raw white fish and by adding the shells and whites of two eggs, and by beating the mixture of stock and fish and eggs over the fire until a froth rises, you will have gone a long way towards making an unconventional **consommé of fish**. This soup is a

little troublesome, because it has to be strained through muslin and heated up again afterwards ; but if your fish stock is good to begin with, and if you have been so fortunate as to have a glass of Chablis or any other good dry white wine to throw in, you will not be ashamed of the result. In short, we are back for the fourth or fifth time to our root principle of the **market or larder first** and the choice of dishes afterwards.

Before setting down some hints for one or two soups which your English cookery-book may not teach you to make so well, I must try to explain why soup has not been popular in England. English soups are generally either too poor or too "good." When soup is made for distribution from charitable kitchens, it is too often a crude production most trying to the stomachs of the poor creatures who have been short of their usual solid food. Far too reckless a use is made of dry pulse. I assisted some years ago at the free distribution of soup in a London parish, and was shocked to find that it was made on the same formula every day, until the recipients, in spite of their hunger, began to hate the sight of it. With no greater expenditure for materials, it would have been possible to have avoided this disgust while enormously increasing the dietetic value of the gifts. At the other extreme, we find people despising every soup which is not the quintessence of the most costly materials. In some quarters soup must be made from real turtle, or from the pick of prime beef, or from fresh lobsters, or from whole chickens before they will look at it. I know men, especially city men, who have no use

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at all for a perfect little French soup which stimulates the gastric juices and launches the whole dinner on its proper voyage. Yet these same men are highly pleased when they are given a plateful of appetite-killing meat-essence in which some leathery oysters or a poached egg can be seen floating horribly, like jelly-fish in the tide. By a "good" soup our English cooks too often mean a soup which has been made as if no other dish of fish, flesh or fowl is to follow it.

Speaking generally, the housekeeper who relies upon large reserves of soups from the grocer's, either dry in packets or wet in bottles, is in a pitiable condition. I grant that in flats or cottages, where the staff is very small, one may do worse than keep in reserve for emergencies **a bottle** or two of soup made by a first-class English house or **a tin** of the delicious tomato soup packed by an American house whose name everybody knows. There are also some **squares** of soup in packets, costing about sixpence each, which are useful to meet a sudden call. But, with the exception of the tiny gelatine **tubes** of concentrated consommé, I have never found any of the very cheap ready-made soups worth even the small amount of money they cost. The low-priced dry soups in **packets** yield a soup with a deadly defect for which I can think of no better name than "stuffiness." It is a common idea that if you evaporate moisture from meat and vegetables to make them portable, and then swell them out again with water from a tap, you restore them to their original condition. There is no greater error. The moisture in a fresh pea is not the same

as that which is distributed by the Metropolitan Water Board.

Your cookery-book will tell you a good deal about the most important soup in all France and therefore in all the world—namely, the **Pot-au-feu**. But this is the best moment for me to point out that I am assuming your cookery-book to be a good one, full of saving doctrine and undefiled by the ranker heresies of English cooking. In order that you may test your book, I suggest here and now that you compare its prescription for Pot-au-feu with what immediately follows. Do not expect your book to use the same words as mine and do not be put off by trivial or even considerable differences of procedure ; but, if your book be found, so to speak, to belong to another world so far as Pot-au-feu is concerned, you had better go and buy a new one.

Even those who have forgotten most of their French know that “ feu ” means “ fire ” and that “ pot ” means “ pot.” So we will begin with a few words about the pot and a few more about the fire. Our pot, or marmite, or casserole, must be of fire-proof clay, and roomy enough to hold the fowl which Henry IV. wished every Frenchman to have in the pot on a Sunday. The lid must fit closely : because the simmering will be protracted through six long hours, and not more than a teacupful of liquid should escape as vapour from start to finish.

The fire (or gas-jets) must be so managed that the

heat will be both gentle and even. If we use gas, we should choose one of the larger rings, with the flame turned down very low, thus distributing the heat all over the bottom of the pot. On some gas-stoves it is necessary to raise the pot a little above the usual grid, by supporting it on two bits of metal, such as poker. The essential point is that the pot-au-feu must never boil. It must simmer all the time.

Now for the ingredients. A pot-au-feu being primitive fare, water is the next element to mention after the pot of earth and the slow fire. We will pour into the casserole two quarts of water, and we will immediately add three pounds of shin (or round) of beef, tied neatly with white tape or clean string. We will put on the lid and set the pot over gentle heat.

Now we will prepare two large carrots, two turnips of medium size, and, if possible, a small parsnip and four sticks of celery. We will cut all these into discs or cubes. If we have four leeks, we will trim them and cut up the white parts. Failing leeks, we will use two good onions. We shall also want two dozen black peppercorns, three or four cloves, a blade of mace, and, if we are French, a garlic clove as well.

At the end of about an hour we must begin watching the liquor which drowns the bit of beef in the pot. As soon as a white scum appears, no time must be lost in skimming it entirely away. When the skimming is finished, we replace the lid till the simmering begins again. We can now add our vegetables and seasonings, not forgetting a small teaspoonful of salt. From this point the cooking must go on, very slowly, for four hours more. Finally, we lift out the piece of meat, we remove the vegetables, we skim off any

additional grease—and there is our pot-au-feu. [Some cooks facilitate the removal of the vegetables by tying them in muslin before putting them in the casserole.] The pot-au-feu does not need to be eaten the same day. When wanted it can be seasoned and eaten as a soup, or it can be made the foundation of all kinds of important dishes. We must beware, however, of cooking a cabbage in it, if we want the pot-au-feu to remain good for more than twenty-four hours.

Like every other bright light, the glory of Pot-au-feu casts a shadow. The piece of **boiled beef** which is left over has to be eaten in thrifty households, and the day for eating it is regarded by French papas as a kind of Black Monday, just as the English Monday's cold beef or mutton was a penance to the London husband when he still lived over his shop and took his midday meal in the bosom of his family seven days a week. The French boiled beef is accompanied by boiled carrots and large rough grains of a special salt, but neither the carrots nor the *gros sel* can reconcile the Frenchman to his hard lot. It is one more proof of the excessive benevolence of Providence to males that all kinds of business appointments crop up on a boiled-beef day, thus enabling the French citizen to eat at a restaurant and to leave Madame and the little Jules and the little Madeleine to wrestle with the dish. In England and in war-time, if we are to have the authentic Pot-au-feu we must face the boiled beef as well. And if the beef was good to start with : if we have not allowed it to become black and dry through being only partially submerged in the

broth : and if we will eat it with a small white cabbage which has been cut in half and cooked tender in the pot-au-feu itself for about forty minutes : then our penance will not be too hard for us to bear.

In the introductory chapter I advised those readers who have small establishments to escape from the tyranny of the **all-the-year-round stock-pot**. It is taken for granted, however, that stock will be frequently made and that nothing suitable for its preparation will be wasted. In practice, nevertheless, my advice for the making of particular lots of stock, instead of carrying on the stock-pot generally, will be justified to such an extent that even the occasional throwing away of an ounce or two of scraps may turn out to be true economy in the end.

As soon as you are in possession of stock from a hare, or a partridge, or the bone of a boiled ham, or any other stock-yielding substance, you must proceed to apply the oft-reiterated rule of this book and to build upwards and onwards therefrom. Some stocks are practically flavourless and to these you may add anything you like. Others, especially those made from the remains of roast game, are often so flavoury that they require nothing more than a thickening. With the leavings of a hare and a thickening of red haricots you can make a wonderful soup, and it may be worth your while to try the experiment of adding to it some heated (not boiled) milk just before it is served. I have tasted a soup of this kind which sufficed for six persons, although very little meat remained on the bones of the hare before they were

taken in hand for soup. The milk would have been wasted if this use had not been found for it. So would the hare's bones. This meant that the cost to the household for the haricots and the fuel worked out at about a halfpenny for each person, the tureenful of fine soup therefore costing threepence.

As most of the great cookery-books have been written in countries where the **abstinence days** are more or less observed, they nearly all contain elaborate directions for making purely **vegetable stocks**. My own practice is to prepare vegetable stocks myself, when vegetables are at hand ; but it is not always worth while to buy the materials expressly for stock. In an earlier chapter I referred to the modern vegetable extracts such as "Marmite." [As most readers infer, whenever they see a proprietary article mentioned in a cookery-book that the writer has received an enormous cheque for his puff, I take leave to state that I do not know the proprietor of "Marmite" from Adam ; and that he has never given me so much as the smallest-sized pot of his preparation.] Possibly there are already some better things of the same sort, but I have still to meet with them. With this kind of extract at hand, the whole art or mystery of soup-making is opened to the least experienced. I am bound, however, to recognise the fact that you will sometimes find yourself overburdened with vegetables suitable for stock-making ; so here are brief directions for using them.

For a light-coloured stock use white haricot beans, butter beans, or peas ; for a dark one use red haricots

or lentils. Soak the cereals for some hours, put them in a casserole (in the water in which they were soaked) along with carrots, parsnips, celery and onions, prepared and cut up into little squares, and a bouquet of herbs. Simmer them for many hours. Strain the stock into a jar, and reheat it from time to time if you cannot use it at once. A less cheap method is to slice up some celery and onions and carrots and turnips, and to fry them in butter with some sweet herbs. When they are nicely fried they must be put in a saucepan of cold water. After they have been brought to the boil they must be simmered down for an hour or two until one-third of the water is gone. As in the other process, the stock is finally strained and put away.

As this, however, is a book in praise of thrift, it must be made plain that we do not always need such stocks as have been described. There is a rough-and-ready rule in frugal circles which declares that we ought not to throw away the water in which any food has been boiled, with the exception of water that has been used for boiling eggs. It goes without saying that the rule is not to be insisted upon when any dirt appears in the water, as it is apt to do sometimes—for example, in the cooking of certain tubers. Still, speaking broadly, the advice is good. I know that some readers will be filled with horror at the idea of using the water in which cauliflowers have been boiled, so it will be well to give plain directions whereby this matter may be brought to the test.

To-day, being a Friday, I have lunched mainly from

a cauliflower, served whole except for the leaves, with Hollandaise sauce. To-night, if I can spare the time, I shall take the cauliflower water as the beginning of a soup which, without bragging, I should not feel ashamed to offer to the first gourmet in England. Of course my cauliflower was stripped of greenery and was boiled without soda, but the water held plenty of salt.

I shall melt in a stewpan over a very gentle heat about two ounces of butter and I shall add three or four fairly large onions cut up into rings. The lid will be replaced tightly and the rings of onion will simmer as slowly as possible for a full hour. You will understand that if the lid fitted too loosely the vapours would escape and the onions would begin to fry, which would spoil everything. When the hour is fully run out I shall add the cauliflower water, having first brought it exactly to the boiling point. From my bread-bowl I shall take what fragments I can find of stale bread and shall break them up small and throw them into the stewpan. The lid will be replaced and the simmering will go on for at least another hour. When the second hour has passed I shall examine a spoonful of the soup in a cup and shall make up my mind whether it requires any more salt, which will be unlikely, as the cauliflower water was salted already. With a wooden spoon I shall finally rub the soup through a sieve, thus breaking and crushing the bread and the onions and keeping back everything tough or lumpy. If the liquid which comes through the sieve is too thin I shall pour it back into the stewpan and let it go on simmering until it becomes smaller in quantity and therefore less watery. If, on the other

hand, it is too thick I shall add the proper quantity of milk. And, when it is served, nobody who is out of the secret will guess that a cauliflower or an onion or pieces of stale bread have had anything to do with it. As this soup is practically the famous **Soubise** of the French cuisine, it can be made part of a formal menu and is by no means to be regarded as an amateur's cheap mess. In cold print it looks worse than unpromising ; but in the hot soup-plate it tastes almost too good to be true. Frenchwomen throw in bacon rinds for the last hour of simmering.

When the Expeditionary Force returns from France, our soldiers will probably have made acquaintance with **Potage Potiron**, because pumpkins are in season while they are fighting on French soil. In the French quarter of London you can buy pieces of pumpkin by the pound, as you buy cheese. As soon as you have acquired a pound of pumpkin, peel it and clean it, and put it for a little while in boiling water. Meanwhile you ought to have been frying in butter a leek and an onion cut up into small pieces. You place the pumpkin (which must also be cut up into small pieces) with the leek and onion in a saucepan, pepper and salt them and then drown them in warm water. With the lid on the pan, they must cook slowly throughout a long hour. Cut up three or four medium-sized potatoes and put them with the other vegetables in the pan. After thirty or forty minutes more of slow cooking, the soup will be ready to eat. [Some people fry slices of carrot with the onion and the leek, but I am shy of recommending this course to every-

one, as many housewives will not take pains to see that the carrots are in first-class condition. A poor carrot has brought many a good dish to a bad end.] This pumpkin soup ought to cost about a penny a portion, allowing nearly half-a-pint to each person.

With these models in view, the intelligent cook will be able to make use of the vegetables in her garden or within reach of her purse, without the expense of conforming exactly to the proportions laid down in cookery-books. The basis of an onion [or of the white part of a leek] fried in butter is an immensely valuable secret, and the ignorance or neglect of it largely accounts for the unpopularity of soups in England. There is a foolish idea that the onion or leek will continue to assert itself unpleasantly. A fair trial will dispose of this error at once.

In my directions for a Soubise I spoke of simmering my onions in butter because I was presupposing the need for a Friday soup. I may now explain that good dripping will serve the same purpose and that the quantity of dripping can be rather less than the quantity of butter.

Mr Peter Gallina, the brilliant young restaurateur who directs the "Rendezvous" in Soho, published a year or two ago a thin paper-covered book called "Eighteen Simple Menus." As a rule, I should not go to Mr Gallina as a teacher of economical cookery; for he is shockingly open-handed with eggs and butter

and cream. But there are two or three recipes for soups in his book which will not strain the resources of the most careful housewife, and I will transcribe them here. They prove once more that everyone who is the master of an art knows how to be simple when simplicity is called for.

“ **Crème Parmentier.**—Put a piece of butter in a saucepan with a tablespoonful of flour ; let it cook for a few minutes and moisten it with a tumbler of milk. Add two pints of water, two or three peeled potatoes, two leeks, and one onion cut into small pieces. Season to taste with salt and pepper, let the whole boil for fifteen or twenty minutes, then take a strainer and whisk it so that the whole goes through. Put in a tureen, with a piece of butter (a little cream can be added). Stir and serve.

“ Should the soup get too thick, add a little more water, or milk. This soup is sufficient for four persons.

“ **Crème St Germain.**—Put a piece of butter the size of an egg in a saucepan ; when reduced, add one onion and one carrot cut in small squares, also one leek cut small, half a bay leaf and a sprig of thyme ; cook for about one minute and add half-a-pound of green split peas, three pints of stock or water, salt, pepper and nutmeg ; one potato, thinly cut to bind the soup, can also be added. Let boil steadily for about one hour, then strain through a fine sieve, finally adding a piece of fresh butter.

“ **Crème Ambassadeur.**—Proceed as for the Crème St Germain. Cook separately in salted water one handful of rice for ten or twelve minutes, and when the soup is strained and ready to be served add the rice.

“ **Crème Santé.**—Cut one onion and one leek finely, put in a stewpan with butter, cook them but do not let them brown, add six medium potatoes, cut finely, and three pints of water, season with salt, pepper and nutmeg, boil gently for half-an-hour and strain through a fine sieve. Have another small saucepan with a little butter ; when warm put a little fresh sorrel well washed and cut “ julienne ” shape, let it cook one minute and add to soup, finally adding a little cream, a piece of butter, and the yolk of an egg all well mixed together.

“ **Crème Cressonnière.**—Prepare in the same way as for Crème Santé, only garnish differently ; get a nice green bunch of watercress, pick off the leaves and wash stalks cleanly, add stalks to soup, cook for half-an-hour and strain. Boil the leaves of the watercress in water for a few seconds and then add them to the soup. Finally add a piece of butter, a little cream, and the yolk of an egg.

“ **Crème Solferino.**—Put a piece of butter in a stewpan, add one carrot and one onion cut into small dice, also one bay leaf, a sprig of thyme, and a few pepper-

corns ; cook for a minute and add a pinch of flour. When mixed add half-a-pint of tomato purée, also two pints of stock or water ; let simmer for an hour. A flavouring bunch consisting of one leek, one stick of celery, and a few sprigs of parsley should be added, then season with salt, pepper and nutmeg, and serve. A few peas can be added at the moment of serving. The flavouring bunch should be removed before sending the soup to table.

“ **Crème Dubarry.**—Cut one onion finely, also the white part of one leek, put them in a stewpan with a piece of butter and fry them, without letting them colour, for two minutes ; add two spoonfuls of flour, mix and let cook for a minute, add one pint of boiling milk and three pints of water, mix well together with a whisk, put on a moderate fire to boil, taking care to stir continually ; take a cauliflower and remove all leaves, cut it in pieces and add to soup ; season with salt, pepper, and a little nutmeg ; let boil steadily for twenty-five minutes, strain, and finally add a little cream.

“ **Potage Bonne Femme.**—Cut two onions and two leeks finely, put them in a saucepan with a piece of butter, cook for a minute, add five pints of water, eight potatoes cut in dice, salt and pepper and a little nutmeg. Cook for twenty minutes, then add a handful of vermicelli, boil for three minutes, and serve.”

All the soups just explained have familiar names and are cheap, tasty and wholesome.

Before passing on from Soup to Fish I had better say something about the fish stock which will be mentioned several times in a later chapter. A reason will be given against having too much fish stock on one's hands, but there will often be plenty of it in the house. Fish soups are rarely served in England. One excuse for their rarity may be found in the foolishness of certain enthusiasts who have tried to make and sell the famous **bouillabaisse** while lacking the Mediterranean fishes without which it is bound to disappoint the eater. I shall therefore write only a few lines about fish soup, and shall describe the simplest of them all.

Your fish stock being well strained, put a quart of it in a clean stewpan. Mix a tablespoonful of corn-flour carefully in half-a-pint of milk, taking care that there are no lumps. Add the milk and cornflour to the stock and bring the contents of the pan to the boiling-point, stirring all the time. You will season the mixture with pepper and salt according to the saltiness or otherwise of the stock. After the boiling-point is attained, simmer the soup for a few minutes, as it is necessary in this and every other dish to beware of eating such stuff as cornflour until it is properly cooked. Now take a bowl or a soup tureen and put at the bottom of it an egg well beaten up. Pour the soup in very slowly, never ceasing to stir and stir and stir.

As the fish stock costs you nothing and the corn-flour is an almost negligible expense, you will get this soup for practically the price of one egg and a tumblerful of milk. In order that those who eat it may treat it as a food and not swallow it as a liquid (which

is dangerous where cornflour and all other starch is concerned) little pieces of toast should be thrown in at the last moment. At my own modest table I do not use toast ; but as my little innovations would take too long to explain, the reader must be left to work out his own ideas, always remembering to make use of what might otherwise be wasted.

CHAPTER VI

SAUCES

EVERYBODY has heard of Voltaire's gibe that England is the country of a hundred religions and only one sauce. But everybody has not tried to analyse the causes of our national shortcomings so far as sauces are concerned. As I point out in other chapters, the English prefer to confine themselves to the best materials, and it follows that they do not care to veil the perfections of their sirloins and saddles under trimmings. There is, however, another reason. During the years when the great sauces were being brought to perfection in France, the English were entering upon an epoch of neo-Puritanism. I am speaking of the eighteenth century and of the Evangelical Revival. The Evangelicals certainly did not mortify themselves after the fashion of the mediæval saints. Indeed, they ate and drank amply and choicely. It is beyond dispute, however, that they disliked a show of extravagance and luxury, and therefore they fell out of the running so far as the higher cookery is concerned. And their error persists up to this day. When an enthusiast for good cookery describes some happy discovery in a mixed company, he usually finds at least one of his hearers looking at him with a pained smile of polite reproach, as if to say: "Thank God we don't all worship our luncheon and dinner like this."

It is quite commonly believed that wide ranges of sauces are demanded by the glutton alone. Now, so far as my own experience goes, sauces have an entirely different function and effect. The men and women in England who eat too much and acquire gout or indigestion or liver complaints are not the lovers of a varied and skilfully-sauced diet. They are the people who eat their way through the fifty-two weeks of the year on a narrow programme of bacon and eggs, hot joints, occasional game, about a dozen different vegetables at the most in twelve months, few salads, and large quantities of pastries and sweets. In fifty years a man of this type probably eats at least a ton more food than is consumed in the same period by a reasonable gourmet. He derives less energy and pleasure from his meals ; and his food costs him more.

I will grant, in fairness, that there are many sauces which every right-minded man must pronounce sinful luxuries. A sauce which requires a whole day's labour to prepare about a pint, and costs as much as would keep a labourer's family for a month, ought to stick in one's throat [except when it is made to maintain culinary standards at their highest and as an exercise in the utmost professional skill]. These wildly extravagant sauces, however, are more talked about than made. Most of the restaurants where they flourished have shut their doors, and there are few people left, outside the new-rich of the United States, to support the chefs in these pretensions.

In old cookery-books one sometimes found recipes

for sauces which caused the earnest reader to lift up his hands in horror. For example, I have come across one which required six bottles of good wine, twelve pounds of prime beef, four capons and ten game birds for the extraction of just enough sauce to fill an ordinary sauce-boat. But it is probable that such directions as these were never once carried out. They were intended to hoodwink the public. We know that the sauce-makers in old Paris were banded together in a guild and that they guarded their mystery with the most jealous care. **Sauce Espagnole** was a dead secret. Chefs refused to prepare it until the other servants had gone to bed ; and, when they were pressed for the recipe by personages who could hardly be refused, they seem to have invented monstrous prescriptions which both discouraged the inquirer and helped to justify the cook's lavish expenditure in his pantry and kitchen. It is to be understood, therefore, that we have to do in this chapter with the use of sauces, not their abuse ; and that we can put all freak sauces on one side.

The true use of sauce is soundly stated by Dr Thudichum, who says : " Solid varieties of food, soluble only by digestion, are not rarely dry in substance, or unattractive in taste, or insufficiently or too strongly flavoured. To make such dry food moister, to lubricate it, and thus aid in its use, to increase the attractiveness of the taste by additions of flavours and juxtaposition of contrast, to hide or mask excessive flavours, certain liquid additions have been invented which pass by the name of

saucers" ["The Spirit of Cookery," p. 223. London, 1895].

The best sauce is well known to be Hunger. Those German stragglers who were captured after the battle of the Marne with nothing but raw beets and raw oats in their poor stomachs had got down the stuff with the help of this sauce; and, if they had not bolted the beets but had masticated them well, they might have eaten worse food. Next to Hunger comes Salt. Of course, most of us would call salt a condiment, not a sauce. It is instructive, however, to note that the word **sauce** has been worn down from the word **salsa**. Even the least learned, by grouping together the words "salt," "salsa" and "salivation," will perceive the ancient origins of the true philosophy of sauce.

All this may seem a lengthy preamble. But it is of the utmost importance that the cook who wants to get out of narrow ways, and to keep house on cheaper and pleasanter and healthier lines, should disabuse her mind entirely of the belief that sauces are **merely luxuries**. Having grasped their true place in kitchen economy, she will find a vast field of possibilities opened to her. The cheaper kinds of fish and the second and third cuts of meat can be brought up to the level of the best fish and the prime cuts as soon as the cook is willing to spend on ingredients for sauce a part (not all) of the money she has saved at the fishmonger's and the butcher's.

To some extent, sauces are already recognised, even in the most humdrum and monotonous kitchens. The cook who simply stews down a large cooking apple to take away the richness of a goose or a duck or a piece of fresh pork, is using sauce in one of its most necessary applications. Our plain cooks have also some dim perception of what is called **Melted Butter**. This is the sauce that Voltaire jeered at, and the name is certainly most unfortunate. Every writer on cookery hates it. Over and over again in jotting down recipes, where one would naturally write of a little melted butter in a stewpan (meaning some butter newly melted and nothing else), one has to guard against some reader thinking of the so-called melted butter which is used as a sauce. And, too often, this sauce is even more hateful than its name. Cooks think that it is easy to make; yet the truth is that the preparation of this sort of sauce, or of its sisters **Sauce Blanche** and **Sauce Blonde** is considered a test of skill among those who know what they are talking about. **Mustard Sauce** and **Caper Sauce** and **Parsley Sauce** are frequently found to be no more than melted butter sauce mixed with mustard or capers or chopped parsley.

Bread Sauce is often good in England and is used intelligently in relation to game. **Mint Sauce** is generally well made, and this also is used in the right way. But there are not many other sauces which can be safely asked for in ordinary homes. The **Hollandaise**, in two cases out of three, is a debacle of good eggs and good butter, and it often reminds me of a friend, both a cook and a scholar, who, when trying to consume with me an infamous *Hollandaise* which had cost a

shilling for a very small boatful, moaned : " Something is here for tears."

We must, none the less, be reasonable and not attempt to imitate in small kitchens the achievements of the sauce-cooks in great houses and in first-class restaurants. Many a housewife has been discouraged in her attempts to turn over a new leaf by being told that serious cookery is impossible unless one maintains constant supplies of the famous "**mother sauces**." Writers on cookery tell us that there are two great foundation sauces, "the Adam and Eve of cookery, whence most others have sprung." These sauces are **Espagnole**, which is a brown sauce, and **Veloutée**, which is white ; and nearly all other sauces are supposed to be formed by additions to these two. Other writers speak of three foundations, or even five. I do not propose to reproduce the well-worn arguments. Nor will it be possible to give in detail instructions for making the grand sauces, either mothers or daughters. That they are beyond the reach of ordinary housekeepers became plain to me one night when I was watching the preparation of my own little dinner in the kitchen of a restaurant where the proprietors were well known to me. Rightly or wrongly, the chef had been dismissed an hour before. The kitchen staff was cosmopolitan, and, as it was a time of International crisis, there was a good deal of strong feeling all round. I noticed that the manager was anxious and that he was spending more time in the kitchen than was usual. It turned out that he had fears for his "foundations," which he valued at nearly £50 ;

because, some years before, a sudden change of staff had been attended by an "accident" to these mother sauces.

The great **foundations** are entitled to the utmost honour ; and, when one goes to a good restaurant, it is generally a pity to ask for plain dishes instead of fish and entrées with which the famous sauces are served. Let home be home ; and let the professional restaurateur show us that he is a professional who knows his work.

Now for some sauces. We will begin with a simple version of **White Sauce**. I shall take it for granted that you have a good, small, enamelled saucepan, with the enamel entirely unbroken, and that you possess a wooden spoon which is not too clumsy. Melt rather less than an ounce of butter in the pan and cook therein some flour, weighing a trifle less than the butter. It goes without saying that, as you are aiming at a white sauce, you will not let the mixture become brown. When the flour and butter are cooked, draw the saucepan to the side of the stove and add two gills of good white stock made from the remains of a chicken or from some veal. Stir it up well and replace it over the fire, continuing to stir until it boils. After the boiling-point is reached, go on cooking the mixture slowly for nearly a quarter of an hour. Then season it with pepper and salt (varied according to the saltiness of the stock) and with a little lemon juice. Strain the sauce through a hair sieve, or through a pointed strainer. I take it for granted that you possess a perforated spoon and that

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you will always skim sauces and all other preparations on which a scum rises. If you wish the sauce to be beautifully smooth, you will wring it through a cloth instead of sieving it. You are to understand that this is not a complete sauce, but a very simple foundation.

I am tempted to give you directions for a much more satisfactory white foundation—a true **Veloutée**—but this is a handbook of economical cookery. So we will go on to a simple **Sauce Espagnole**, or smooth brown sauce. You will make it on a day when you have some trimmings of ham or veal in the house, or some good scraps of birds or ground game. Cut up three sound carrots, as well as an onion and a clove. Butter the bottom of a saucepan with about an ounce of butter and add your scraps of game and meat with the vegetables. Put the lid on the pan and cook the contents on a slow fire. When they have turned a light brown, stir in a tablespoonful of flour and just enough hot stock to moisten the mixture well. As I do not know how much game and meat you will be using, I cannot define the quantity of stock exactly, but it must be enough to make the stirring of the mixture quite easy. You must stir all the time you are pouring in the stock. Introduce a bouquet as described on page 145. Replace the lid once more, and simmer the sauce as gently as possible for about four hours. Finally, skim it and sieve it. Pour it into a jar and let it get cold. Then cover the jar, and the sauce will keep for some time.

A Sauce Béchamel is considered a mother sauce by many authorities, and, as I prescribe it in the chapter on vegetables for a **Choufleur au gratin**, I will give simple directions for making it. Begin as before by melting an ounce of butter in the pan and cooking in it a dessertspoonful of flour without letting it begin to turn brown. Add salt, mace and pepper—white pepper, because this is to be a whitish sauce. Add two gills of hot milk, stirring it all the time as you pour it in, and then a little finely minced parsley. Go on stirring until the mixture boils. After the boiling-point is reached, the further boiling must proceed very gently indeed and for not more than two or three minutes. You can improve this sauce very much by putting in some cream as well as hot milk. The sauce requires straining. [This is a poor man's Béchamel without mushrooms. Use very little mace.]

A Sauce Hollandaise is considered rather luxurious, but it will often be found cheap in the end, as it carries off inexpensive materials in the grand style. To make it you will require the yolks of three eggs. You will put them in a saucepan with two ounces of butter, a dessertspoonful of flour, a dusting of nutmeg and a little salt. Mix all these well together. Add a gill of cold water. Bring them almost to the boiling-point—not quite—stirring all the time. It is of great importance not to bring the mixture to full boiling. As soon as boiling is imminent, draw the saucepan away from the fire and stir in another ounce of butter. You must stir on until the sauce is beautifully smooth. Finally, add the juice of a

good lemon and serve the *Sauce Hollandaise* as hot as possible.

A more distinguished *Sauce Hollandaise* may sometimes be required. If you are a beginner in cookery you had better take two saucepans. Pour some hot water into the larger pan and place the smaller pan therein. Assemble your ingredients. You require two bare tablespoonfuls of vinegar, the well-beaten yolks of three eggs, some salt, some pepper, and rather less than a quarter of a pound of butter. First put the vinegar in the inner pan and reduce it to about half its bulk. Take the pan off the fire and let the vinegar cool for two minutes, then mix into it the beaten yolks of eggs, salted and peppered. Put it back over a moderate heat and cook it for two minutes, never ceasing to stir it. Little by little, introduce an ounce and a half of butter, which you ought to have weighed beforehand. You may take the pan off the fire to put in this butter. Return it to the fire, still stirring it. As soon as you perceive that the butter is thoroughly incorporated with the other ingredients, again lift the pan from the fire and work in, with ceaseless stirring, another two ounces of butter. Put it back over the fire and cook it very gently for another ten minutes, when it will be found smooth and creamy. In this recipe, whenever I speak of putting the pan back over the fire, I mean (if you are using two pans) the inner pan only, and I take it for granted that the water in the outer pan will be boiling, though not boiling fiercely. It is better to learn to dispense with the outer pan for the earlier stages of the operation, but the last ten minutes of cooking are always safer with the outer pan of boiling water. If you are

determined to follow the examples of many cooks and to turn out a **disgraceful Hollandaise**, let the sauce boil.

Sauce Mornay enables a cook to make use of cheap white fish, or even remains of fish from an earlier meal, without appearing to be parsimonious. Heat thoroughly in a small saucepan two gills of good white sauce. Without letting it come to the boil, work in gradually two tablespoonfuls of grated Parmesan cheese and an ounce of butter, not in one lump but little bit by little bit. Cream will do instead of butter, the quantity of cream to be the same as the quantity of grated cheese. The sauce must not boil, but it must be very hot.

For a **Sauce Soubise**, one wants two gills of the simpler *Béchamel* Sauce, with some cream and three or four onions. The onions are cooked in salted water, boiling briskly, until they are quite tender. This may mean a full hour. When the onions are cooked through, they are to be thoroughly drained, chopped up small, and put through a hair sieve. The purée which comes through the sieve is mixed in a saucepan with the *Béchamel* Sauce and is brought to the boil. It is then seasoned with salt and white pepper ; and some people dust in a few grains of cayenne and a thimbleful of powdered sugar. The cream, if you can spare any, is added last of all. This is a very useful sauce for entrées. For example, it enables a house-keeper of modest resources to serve **Côtelettes à la**

Soubise, which many professional cooks wrongly describe as **Côtelettes à la Maintenon**.

As we are not pretending to practise *la haute cuisine*, I shall not attempt an orderly exposition of the famous sauces which are built up from the great foundations. The directions just given can be applied by anybody with ordinary intelligence to the conventional recipes in the regular cookery-books, so as to simplify and cheapen them where necessary. The ordinary books will tell you all about **Egg Sauce**, **Mushroom Sauce**, **Onion Sauce**, **Parsley Sauce**, **Shrimp Sauce**, **Tomato Sauce**, **Sauce Mousseline**, **Sauce Normande**, **Sauce Poivrade**, **Sauce Ravigote**, **Sauce Suprême**, **Sauce Venitienne**, **Sauce Remoulade**, **Sauce Tartare**, and the various sweet sauces for use with puddings. I shall therefore close this chapter with one or two prescriptions which, though they may be found in other books, are so useful in good and economical cookery that it will do no harm to give them prominence.

No man or woman will make progress in cookery while cherishing the idea that it is arbitrary. The best recipes are the best recipes, simply because experience proves that there are no better ways of reaching the desired results. While I was first fumbling and blundering in cookery, I found myself one day groping after the right sauce to serve with the remains of a goose. With the materials which were at hand, I produced a sauce which served its purpose

quite well, and I thought I had made a discovery until an accomplished cook burst out laughing and told me that my supposed novelty was practically the same as a **Sauce Robert**. To make this sauce, chop up two or three big English or French onions and cook them with two ounces of butter, in a closed pan, for about a quarter of an hour. Take the lid off the pan, throw in a little flour, and continue the cooking, stirring with a wooden spoon, until the contents of the pan go down to a brown pulp. Pour in about a gill of good stock, previously heated, and season the mixture with a teaspoonful of made mustard, a teaspoonful of wine vinegar and some salt and pepper. Reduce the sauce by further boiling without ceasing to stir it.

Many a commonplace entrée may be redeemed by a dish of potatoes with **Sauce Maître d'Hotel**. Melt an ounce of butter in a pan and add to it almost its own bulk of chopped parsley, with a dessertspoonful of lemon juice, a taste of nutmeg, some salt and some white pepper. The lemon juice must not be thrown in all at once but must be mixed gradually with the butter and the parsley. Add some cooked potatoes cut in very thin slices, put on the lid of the pan, and shake the slices of potato in the sauce till they are warmed through and well mixed with the other ingredients. It is obvious that the potatoes should be of the firm or waxy kind. A good tablespoonful of cream or white stock, put in at the same time as the slices of potato, will be a great improvement.

I have given the formula for this sauce as part of a recipe for potatoes, but it can be applied to pieces of

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fish or game or meat, as well as to potatoes, with good results.

Mayonnaise is not so very expensive, and it recoups its cost in many ways. Here are directions for making a small quantity. Put into a basin the yolk of an egg. In hot weather you may require two yolks, unless you are able to stand the basin on a block of ice. Add at least a dessertspoonful of vinegar. It is best to mix equal quantities of Tarragon vinegar and French white-wine vinegar. Mix the yolk of egg, the vinegar and a teaspoonful of dry mustard and salt and pepper well together in the basin. Some people sprinkle in a few grains of sugar. The mixing must be very thoroughly done with an egg-whisk or a wooden spoon. Next add, **drop by drop**, half-a-gill of good olive oil. I repeat, **drop by drop**.

The working in of olive oil, drop by drop, is troublesome to the mayonnaise-maker, and certain ingenious persons have tried to ease his burden. A few years ago I bought in a French town a contrivance for regulating the flow of the oil, but I wish I had spent my francs and centimes on a good old French dinner. The best trick I know for adding the oil is to cut a hole in the cork of the oil bottle. While the drops of oil are falling, the stirring must never stop until the sauce becomes very thick and smooth. You will taste the sauce now and again, and you may find that it requires a few more drops of vinegar, which must be stirred in as diligently as the drops of oil.

The making of mayonnaise is a delicate operation, contingent upon the temperature, upon the day's

humidity, and also upon the nature of the materials. Sometimes you will fail to obtain a thick mayonnaise on the lines just laid down. Should this misfortune befall, melt a little butter, let it cool again, and work it into the sauce. In this way you will obtain a mayonnaise good enough to use, although it will be below the professional level.

The useful **Sauce Italienne** requires two gills of brown sauce as a foundation. One begins by chopping up two shalots and putting them into a pan with about a tablespoonful of olive oil. They must be cooked but not browned. Next, one must add half-a-gill of Marsala, the two gills of brown sauce, a dessertspoonful of chopped parsley, a tablespoonful of chopped mushrooms, a bay leaf and a sprig of thyme. This mixture must be simmered very slowly for a quarter of an hour. Should scum rise to the surface, of course it must be skimmed away. Some people mix finely chopped ham with the parsley and mushrooms, in which case the skimming will become still more necessary. Before the sauce is served, the thyme and the bay-leaf must be withdrawn.

Sauce Italienne is poured over **Macaroni** after it has been boiled tender and well drained; over **braised liver** or slices of **braised meat**, and over many other dishes which would otherwise be unattractive.

There is no room for more sauce recipes. But a few lines must be spared for some parting advice. Although sauces have been studied for thousands of

years, it was not until the seventeenth century that cooks began to prepare the great sauces as we now understand them. And, just as those cooks improved upon their predecessors, the cooks of to-day ought not to stand still. Our ideas of a good dinner are not the ideas which prevailed in the reign of *le Grand Monarque*, and our sauces should not be the same as those which were prepared by Vatel. We command a greater variety of materials than Vatel ever knew, while our notions are less vulgar. A school of brilliant but simple sauce-making will arise if this generation will apply itself to the problem. We ought to be neither irreverent nor servile towards the past ; and we ought to be neither complicated nor indolent in our new departures. "The destiny of nations," said Brillat Savarin, "depends on the manner in which they take their food " ; and, as the basic processes of cookery are everlasting, it is in sauces and in garnishes that reform and progress must be achieved. I saw an old sauce-boat the other day in the shape of an unrigged galleon ; and, as I looked, I thought that sauce-boats were barques to carry mankind on and on.

CHAPTER VII

FISH

I BEGIN this chapter on Fish on the morrow of the Admiralty's announcement that our Grand Fleet has swept the whole of the North Sea without meeting a single German ship. While it may be too much to hope that the enemy will be completely thwarted in further mine-laying and that their submarines will never be heard of again, it is safe to assume that fish will still be caught in British nets and brought to British markets. Indeed, there are well-informed people who believe that fish will be landed more plentifully and sold more cheaply than ever.

A great quantity of fish is eaten in England ; but it is amazing that the total is not twice as great. Fish is the only important food that can be had for the mere taking. If the present expanse of the North Sea were suddenly upheaved and became dry land covered with pastures and orchards in which one could find corn without having to plough and sow, and fruit without having to plant and prune, and sheep and oxen without having to breed and rear, there would be great public satisfaction. But we are not much impressed by the familiar knowledge that millions of tons of fish are **waiting to be caught**, in fine and plump condition, without our having had to spend a farthing in hatching and feeding them. Bacon, which is not a fresh meat and is expensive to produce, seems to be

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regarded in almost innumerable English homes as a daily necessity. If fish were in equal demand, the merchants, who have been criticised, not quite justly, could arrange to give it to us in larger quantities, in better condition, and at lower prices. I do not say that the fish supply could be organised as closely as the milk supply and the bread supply; because storms and fogs and the vagaries of the fish themselves are disturbing factors; but I do say that, if we were steadfast in calling for cheaper fish and more of it, we should certainly get it.

Some years ago I tried to find out by direct observation and inquiry the truth about our English attitude towards a fish diet. I gathered that the **finer fishes** are highly prized, and that they are generally well cooked, in the best houses and clubs and restaurants. At the other end of the scale, I found among the lower classes an apparent enthusiasm for fish which did not, however, stand closer investigation. Our poorer quarters abound in establishments called **fried-fish shops** which do a roaring trade; and it is not uncommon to see young beauties, who, in the uncertain gaslight, seem fashionably dressed, walking along London's eastern highways consuming dark brown slabs of fish and wedges of fried potatoes to match, these delicacies being wrapped in a back number of a newspaper whose contents are read under obvious difficulties. It appears, however, from the testimony of those who are in the confidence of these lovely creatures, that the fish is much less liked than the "fry." Indeed it may be said that

fried fish of this kind is more of an animal than of a fish diet, the frying vehicle being rarely oil and nearly always **animal fat**. Among those of the same class who have homes and kitchens of their own, the popular fish are kippers and bloaters, which give satisfaction largely because of the slight scorching of the surface by which they are cooked. The smoked fish which used to be best prepared at Findhorn, and is now known to the Cockney housewife as a "finny haddie," is also relished largely because of the taste of the smoke and the fire. Omitting working-class households where the wife, before marriage, was in domestic service, I have rarely found in this social grade the habit of eating **fish for fish's sake**. Where even the simplest sauces are unattempted, because they are thought to be too much trouble, a delicate fish has no chance against two pork sausages or a slice of meat almost blackened in a frying-pan with rings of raw onion. Among the middle classes, fish is patronised fitfully. Owing to the horror of washing-up, which I have already mentioned, an English housekeeper prefers to give **two helpings** from one dish rather than one helping from each of two. If she is intending to spend three shillings on the principal materials for a dinner, she would rather lay out half-a-crown on meat than spend one-and-sixpence at the butcher's and eightpence or ninepence at the fishmonger's. And even in fairly well-maintained middle-class kitchens there is an unwillingness to take trouble with the **sauces and garnishes** so essential to good fish cookery.

It must be admitted, however, that some men are grossly unfair in their expectations. I have heard a

husband, after being chided for objecting to fish at home, make the lofty retort that he would consent to eat his wife's fish dishes if she would bring them up to the standard of his favourite restaurant. In many departments of cookery, even a modest private kitchen can beat the utmost efforts of a hotel kitchen, where too many vapours accumulate and combine. The great fish dishes, however, would be so wasteful if made privately in small quantities that I should hesitate to press them on simple cooks at any time, while in war-time they are unthinkable. At a restaurant, for example, when the bill of fare gives prominence to a sole in a sauce of white wine with tips of asparagus, there is no waste. The whole tin of asparagus tips is used and the whole bottle of cheap white wine follows it. In a private house there may be very good reasons why neither the asparagus nor the wine can be all used while they are still fresh. White wine does not suit everybody; and a dinner with asparagus in it twice over would be an offence against good design. Let nobody therefore insist on the **restaurant standard**. On the other hand, let no housewife imagine that she has done the whole duty of woman towards fish by simply ringing the changes on fillets fried in breadcrumb, middle cuts boiled, and lobster mayonnaise. With the exception of such fish as salmon and mackerel, many items of fish diet are **deficient in natural fat**, and sauce is therefore demanded to make good the defect as well as to please the palate.

Hints have already been thrown out here and there

in this book that **steaming** is better than boiling for many kinds of fish. It is fair to say, however, that some thoroughly accomplished cooks prefer boiling. They argue that fishes, although they live in weak brine, often need salt. This is true. Indeed it will help us to cook them more successfully if we will get it into our minds that fishes, after all, are not so vastly unlike the land animals which we cook and eat. Many people still have an idea that a fish must be watery, forgetting that he breathes air as we do. A fish contains almost as high a percentage of solids as an ox, and he no more tastes of sea-salt than a calf tastes of cowslips. The process of boiling admits of the convenient salting of fish, while steaming presents a difficulty in this respect. Assuming, as I do throughout this book, that only small quantities of food have to be cooked at one and the same time, I recommend a simple process. Butter a plate. Lay your cleaned and trimmed fish in the middle of it. Salt and otherwise season the fish to your taste. Squeeze a few drops of lemon juice over it, if you wish to do so. Butter or grease a sheet of clean white paper. Place this on top of the fish and keep it in position by putting the saucepan lid over everything. Having meanwhile brought some water to the boil in the saucepan, place the plate with its contents on top of the saucepan and let the boiling continue for a little more or less than half-an-hour, according to the kind and size of fish. This is not exactly what is meant by steaming, although it is certainly cooking by steam without letting the water touch the fish. Out-and-out steaming is effected in an open-work steamer through which the steam plays freely.

In Holland, fish is **boiled in sea-water**. This is an experiment I should like to make if I lived on a rocky island in the midst of an absolutely unpolluted sea, but I have never screwed up my courage to use such sea-water as has been available.

If you are determined to boil your fish, put about an ounce of salt to each quart of water—less rather than more. A teaspoonful of vinegar or lemon juice may also be added to each quart of water, to keep the flesh firm and of good colour. After you have boiled your fish, you will have a chance of perceiving why I look upon **boiling** as wasteful. Set the liquor on one side and you will often find that it will cool into a jelly, owing to the large amount of natural gelatine which has been boiled out of the fish. You cannot devise uses for large supplies of fish stock, and it is therefore better, on the whole, to steam the fish, thus retaining all its goodness.

Ten days ago I came across a bad instance of wastefulness in the cooking of fish. Some charitable people were engaged in feeding a large number of the poor and destitute. They had more than a dozen fine cod-fish for the purpose, and their first action after cleaning the fish was to cut off the twelve heads and throw them into the dustbin. A wise cook, even if he had been cooking for rich people, would have retained the heads (of course, taking out the eyes) and would have secured a much better result. When the dozen of fish had been boiled, the water was poured down a drain, although it was so gelatinous that you could have stood a wooden spoon in it when it was

cold. All this took place during the first month of the War, when the Germans were still having it nearly all their own way in France and the outlook was sombre.

To those who still have **open fires**, I can suggest nothing better than the cooking of fish in an old-fashioned **Dutch oven**. The fish must be lightly buttered all over before it is set before the fire. Housekeepers who have nothing but a gas-stove, or closed range, can do wonders by **baking** fish in a moderate oven. I find a **fireproof dish** best and I use the same dish, which has a pleasant old-fashioned look, at the table without risking the breaking up of the fish by transferring it to another vessel. Of course, the dish must be well buttered before the fish is laid in it and it should be covered with buttered paper. If you like, you can poach your fish, especially fillets, in a clean baking-tin well buttered. You will pour in just enough fish stock to cover them. You can add a little white wine to the stock, and make experiments with other flavourings. Like baked fish, a **poached fish** is covered over with buttered paper. Sometimes you will not wish to heat the oven just for one or two fillets, and in this case you can poach them in a shallow saucepan at the top of the stove. They do not require more than a few minutes to cook. When you have lifted them out and drained them well, you should be ready to use some of the hot stock as part of a sauce to serve with them. Learn to reduce fish liquor for sauce. As for stewing, frying, grilling and other ways of cooking

fish, you will find out the best ways from your regular cookery-book, or you will infer them from what is said in other chapters of this manual.

I have referred to the cheapness of herrings. It will pay you well, if you have not the time or skill yourself, to talk the cleaning and filleting over with your fishmonger so that this may be properly done. Herrings are so low priced that it would not be reasonable to expect the fishmonger, at the busiest time of the day, to occupy himself with your requirements unless you are a fairly regular customer for other kinds of fish on which he can recoup himself. I say this because some housewives will never learn to prepare herrings themselves, and, as they are sensitive about giving trouble to shop people, they practically drop this fish out of their scheme of life.

If it were a question of the skate or the eel, I could understand a certain squeamishness. Those fish have not the beauty of Venus rising from the sea. Speaking for myself, I have never quite conquered my horror of the eel, although he is so cooked by the villagers on the banks of the Lower Seine as to make one of the most delicate dishes I have ever eaten. And the skate is an ugly brute. But the herring is a sweet creature to handle. When he is fresh, his silver armour is like Lohengrin's in the opera. There is nothing loathsome about him, inside or out. I shall therefore apologise for him no more but shall take it for granted that my readers will use him freely in war-time, and try to learn to clean him themselves. Now for ways of cooking him.

Having stripped two long fillets from a fresh herring, wipe them with a cloth. Salt them and pepper them, and squeeze over them a little lemon juice. Put them in a cold place until the next day. When you want to eat them, coat them with egg and bread-crumbs and fry them in a deep bath of boiling oil or fat according to the general rule about frying already laid down. Drain the grease from them, and serve them very hot with some chopped parsley and some more lemon juice.

On some other occasion, cut off the heads and tails and fins of some herrings, split the fish open and take out as many bones as you can, big and little. Close the fishes again, as you would close a book, and sprinkle over them lemon juice and salt and pepper. **Lemon juice** is mentioned in this herring cookery because the herring is an oily fish and its oiliness needs correcting. After they have lain for about an hour, dip them in oatmeal until they are thickly mealed on both sides. Take your largest frying-pan and melt in it an ounce or two of the best dripping. As the dripping begins to smoke, transfer the herrings to it, opened, with the flesh downwards and the oatmeal upwards. As soon as the lower side is browned, turn the herrings over and brown them on the mealed side. Drain them thoroughly and serve them very hot. This is the best way of **frying herrings** ; but if you prefer a simpler way you need not split them open. You can merely trim and wash and clean them, scrape and score the skin with a knife, dip them into flour which has been touched up with pepper and salt, and fry them.

A grilled or **broiled herring** is even better than the same fish fried. To prepare it, you cut off the head and fins and you scrape off the scales ; but you do not split the fish open. You score it, smear it over with a little oil or butter, and pepper and salt it. Then you cook the fish for eight or nine minutes under the deflecting griller of a gas-stove or before a hot, bright fire, if you have no gridiron. Mustard sauce and a plain boiled potato go well with a grilled herring.

In frying or grilling herrings, it is always necessary to **score diagonal lines** in the skin, so that the fish shall not shrink and curl.

For herrings to be eaten cold, wash, clean and trim the fish and scrape the skins. Take off, from each herring, two long fillets. Dip these fillets in flour, peppered and salted. Butter a fireproof dish. Roll up each fillet of herring, beginning with the thick end and working to the stump of the tail. Put these rolls rather closely in the fireproof dish and half fill it with a mixture of water and brown vinegar. Add a little of whatever you may possess in the way of peppercorns and mace. Put little bits of butter here and there on the fish, and bake the whole thing for an hour in a moderate oven. Serve the dish as soon as it is cold.

Steamed cod is looked upon as very plain feeding, but it can be made highly attractive by a cook who will vary the sauces from time to time. A good way of using this fish is to **bake it in slices**. Butter a

baking-tin and scatter tiny choppings of raw onion all over the bottom. Lay a slice of cod on this foundation. Pour over the fish a yolk of egg, beaten up with pepper and salt and some lemon juice. The quantity of lemon juice will be according to taste, but it should not be stinted. Dab tiny pieces of butter over the egg and lemon juice. Bake the fish until the top takes a pleasant golden hue. A moment or two before serving, transfer the fish to the dish on which it will be sent to table—taking care that the dish is very hot—and pour a gill of brown sauce into the tin. Stir the brown sauce for a moment or two, so as to mix it well with all that is left in the tin ; bring it to the boiling-point ; and then pour it over the slice of fish. These instructions can be applied to **hake**, **halibut**, and to small thick steaks or cutlets of **rock salmon**.

Some people have a strong objection to **plaice**, and I should certainly agree with them if I were doomed to eat nothing but a daily ration of this fish, plain boiled. It is, however, so much cheaper than soles that we ought to try to make the best of it. Here is a method which is certainly not the worst. Buy a good thick plaice with plenty of flesh on its bones. Clean it. Remove the dark skin if you can : if you can't, the fishmonger will do it for you. Butter a fireproof dish, and sprinkle plenty of fine breadcrumbs and some parsley, chopped very small, all over the butter, with some pepper and salt and a chopped mushroom. I will say, in passing, that if you are buying regularly from the same greengrocer, he ought

to let you have mushrooms in quite small quantities without always expecting you to embarrass yourself with more than you require. Lay the plaice in the dish and cover it with more butter, breadcrumbs, salt, pepper and parsley and, if possible, mushroom. Bake the fish for twenty minutes and serve it in the same dish.

Fried fillets of plaice are universally known.

In giving directions to prepare a plaice after the fashion of a *sole au gratin*, I must make it plain that every careless cook ought to skip this paragraph. The dish requires close attention. As cookery is still in an unscientific stage, culinary writers are obliged to use certain rough-and-ready expressions. For example, I shall have to speak merely of a quick oven ; because, if I should try to give the exact degree of heat required, I should be wasting my time, as oven thermometers are rarely to be seen. So let me warn the reader who is going to cook this dish that it will be wise to keep some extra stock at hand, in case the fish and the dressing should dry up at the critical moment.

The plaice must be thick and plump. And, of course, you will clean it properly, taking off the head and the fins and the dark skin. Make your oven hot. Chop up some parsley, a small shalot, one or two mushrooms according to size, and about an ounce of bacon—the fat only. Mix all these with some very fine breadcrumbs, and season them with pepper and

salt. At the bottom of a fireproof dish, dab tiny pieces of butter. Over the butter spread some of the seasoning, and on the seasoning lay the fish. On top of the fish spread the rest of the seasoning. Add about half-a-gill of any sound white wine that is not very sweet, together with half-a-gill of good white stock. Grate some dry bread or sprinkle some fine crumbs over everything and lay one or two pellets of butter, no bigger than peas, here and there on the top. Bake the whole combination in a quick oven for a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes. Use your best judgment as to the suitable heat. On the one hand, you must not be opening the oven door repeatedly, and, on the other hand, you must not risk either too slow or too rapid baking. In the undesirable and unlikely but still possible event of the sauce drying up, you will have a little hot stock at hand to moisten it.

This is the true method of cooking a sole or **plaice au gratin**. For some reason, or none at all, there is an idea in certain kitchens that in order to prepare a dish *au gratin* there must be a final browning under a salamandre, always with a top skin of grated cheese ; and it is the sober truth that I have met people who think that the word *gratin* equals grated cheese in French. Of course the true meaning is the browning of a dish until it takes a crispness, above and below.

I am going to speak of one more way of using plaice which may seem to be a little foolish, but it is worth knowing. When devising an economical menu,

a housekeeper sometimes wants, at the stage when fish usually appears, an interesting and tasty but not ample item. If plaice or lemon sole happens to be cheap, it will often be possible to buy a quite small fillet for almost nothing. This can be cut to the shape and size of fine **whitebait**. The pieces must be floured all over as lightly as possible, and must then be fried in deep fat. To fry them properly a cheap wire frying basket, which will pay for itself over and over again, ought to be at hand. To make a good job of it, the little pieces of fish should be fried twice. After a first frying for about two minutes, they must be lifted out before they have turned brown and must be drained on paper. The fat having been again raised to boiling-point, the strips of fish can be fried till they are crisp and golden. They must be drained again and salted. [This, of course, is the correct way of cooking real whitebait also.] If the sham whitebait are served with care, slices of lemon and brown bread and butter not being grudged, the imitation of the real article will not be too lamentable a parody.

I know that some housekeepers will feel shy about asking the fishmonger for very small portions of cheap fish, and that they will be unlikely to try the imitation whitebait if I do not suggest a way out. Let us therefore suppose that some more fish is bought at the same time and that it is not wanted until the next day. The surplus can be cooked at once and put on one side to be treated according to one or other of the methods now to be described.

For hot weather a good **salad of fish** is more pleasant than a **friture**. I take from a little book called "Tasty Ways of Cooking Fish" (which seems to be given away at Fishmongers' Hall by the National Sea Fisheries Protection Association) this recipe for Fish Salad by Mr C. Herman Senn :

"Take 1 lb. cold fish, one potato (mashed), one lettuce, two tablespoonfuls salad oil, one tablespoonful vinegar, one hard-boiled egg, one teaspoonful made mustard, one tablespoonful milk, one piece cooked beetroot, two pickled gherkins, parsley, salt, pepper, a pinch of castor sugar. Break up the fish into small pieces, removing the skin and bones. Wash the salad (lettuce or endive), tear into small pieces, and dry in a cloth. Mix the mashed potato with the milk, stir into it the oil and vinegar, season with mustard, pepper, salt and sugar. Mix well, to produce a smooth dressing. Mix the salad with the fish, season well with the prepared dressing. Pile up on a dish or salad bowl ; garnish with slices of gherkins, quarters of hard-boiled egg and slices of beetroot, and serve."

Housekeepers who are likely to make frequent use of fish salads may simplify the work by keeping on hand some **salad cream** or **mayonnaise**. In a cool and dark place mayonnaise will remain good for nearly a week.

In cold weather, fish salads would annoy many people. But nearly everybody enjoys cold fish

warmed up **à la Russe**. Free the fish from skin and bone, and flake it with two fish forks. Chop up about a dozen capers and mix them with two gills of white sauce which you have flavoured with some essence of anchovies. I am assuming that you are using up about a pound of cold fish, in which case a dessert-spoonful of anchovy essence will be required. While you are doing these things, some rice should be boiling on the fire, according to the directions given in the chapter on Entrées. Butter a fireproof dish and spread a layer of fish at the bottom of it. Over the fish spread rice and some of your sauce. Next lay on the sauce some slices of hard-boiled egg, as thin as you can cut them without breaking them up. Repeat these strata of fish, rice, sauce and sliced eggs until the dish is full. You must take care to plan the matter so that slices of egg will be on top, as it would not do to finish with rice or fish. Here and there among the uppermost slices of egg drop some good pellets of butter. Bake the whole for about twenty minutes in a moderate oven. Including the prime cost of the fish, the cost ought not to be more than about eighteenpence the lot, or about threepence for each good portion.

Recipes for **steamed fish puddings**, for **Kromesnies**, for **Kedgerie**, and for **Fish Rissoles** are well and truly set forth in the ordinary cookery-books. It is possible, however, that few readers have made little fish puddings after the fashion of custards. To make these you must chop up half-a-pound of cold fish, without skin or bone. You will want about a dozen

little moulds or basins, but if your family is small you can use moulds or basins for four or five custards only, and put the rest of your fish in a small pie-dish. Half fill the receptacles with the chopped fish. Now make a custard by beating up five yolks of eggs and the whites of three of the eggs in a basin, adding about three gills of milk. It should go without saying that you will not sweeten this custard. You will season it with pepper and salt ; and with some essence of anchovies if your cold fish was of some cheap and insipid kind. Pour this custard on the chopped fish till the moulds are nearly full. Place the moulds in a tin containing boiling water to the depth of about two inches. Lay little covers of greased paper over the moulds and bake them until the custards are set. Of course you will have greased your moulds at the outset and you should have no difficulty in turning out the custards without breaking them. I do not recommend this dish except when eggs are cheap, although it must be borne in mind that two of the whites are available for other purposes. In the month of April I made **fish custards** like these at a cost of about a shilling for ten, and was able to fry the whites of the eggs as a bed for some hop-shoots, which cost me nothing at all. The hop-shoots were boiled in salted water until they were tender, and, after being tossed in butter, were served like lightning on white of egg fried at the table.

A **fish pie** with macaroni or with potatoes is a very cheap dish and there is no reason why it should be unattractive. In houses where the habit of making good though simple sauces does not exist, a fish pie is often a trial to the appetite ; but when a house-

keeper finds that some sauce remains over, as well as some cold fish, her pie may become delightful. A simple procedure is to butter a pie-dish and to spread all over it the cold fish broken into morsels. The remains of sauce should be poured over the fish with some lemon juice and some pepper and salt. Some cooked potatoes, smoothly mashed with milk and seasonings and a little butter or even good dripping, must be laid on top of the fish and pressed well down with the blade of a broad knife. If an egg can be spared, let it be beaten up and let the top of the mashed potato be well brushed over with it. The pie must be baked in a moderate oven until it browns. **Macaroni**, as an ingredient in a fish pie, requires a little more skill. It must be boiled in a large pan, with plenty of room to move, until it is quite tender. When it has been drained and cut up small and mixed with whatever sauce may be on hand, it is to be laid over the pieces of fish. The best plan is to divide all the ingredients for this kind of pie into two parts, so that it will be in layers twice repeated. Breadcrumbs are sprinkled over the top, with small pieces of butter, and the pie is baked a nice brown.

Turning back from these devices for using cold fish, and resuming the main business, I must refer the reader to the systematic cook-books for a hundred ways of handling familiar fish. But I am bound to draw attention to one or two neglected methods which, even when they are mentioned by British writers, are rarely practised in British kitchens. If we were to spend a year in a French household we should fre-

quently hear talk about fish cooked in **court bouillon**. "Court bouillon" may be literally translated "Short Broth"—that is to say, broth made in a very short space of time. Perhaps the simplest form of it is that which one meets with in some parts of Brittany. You mix water and milk in equal quantities, add a little salt, and bring the liquid to the boil. Turbot cooked in this broth makes a good invalid diet. After laying the fish in the liquid, bring the *court bouillon* once more to the boil, then draw the fish-kettle to the side of the fire with the lid on, and simmer the fish until it is tender. The *court bouillon* should cover the fish entirely, but should not drown it too deeply.

A more elaborate but still cheap *court bouillon* is made by measuring out enough water to cover the piece of fish and mixing with it some light dry white wine (or half the quantity of white wine vinegar), a sliced onion, a thinly sliced carrot, some cloves, some peppercorns, and salt according to the kind of fish. You must boil all these things together for fifteen minutes, putting in the water a little muslin bag containing a bouquet of herbs. Meanwhile you sprinkle a little lemon juice over the fish, lay it on the tray of the fish-kettle, and, when the *court bouillon* is ready, you lower it into the liquid, of course taking out the bouquet. Put the lid on the kettle and cook the fish gently in the broth till it is done. Should scum rise to the surface of the broth, you must either skim it off or expect it to spoil the look of your fish when you raise it from its bath.

French cooks sometimes vary the foregoing recipe by using red wine instead of white. The **court bouillon bleu** is supposed to give a beautiful tint to

certain fish, in some cases blue and in others more like mother-of-pearl. The eminent Jules Gouffé taught that this red (or bleu) *court bouillon* might be strengthened by the addition of some bones and trimmings from the fish.

Court bouillon, made with either red wine or white wine, can be kept in a jar and used several times over. Like frying fat, which requires to be clarified and purged of any little fragments of batter or fish which may fall into it, *court bouillon* gives the cook a little trouble; but it enables first-class results to be achieved at an insignificant cost.

Fish that has been skinned, and soaked in salted milk, and coated lightly with flour, can be laid in butter in a fireproof dish and seasoned with salt and pepper, and browned. The butter should be cooked to a golden colour before the fish is put in it. After the fish has itself taken the same golden-brown colour on both sides, it should be moistened with lemon juice, and afterwards with more of the brown butter. It is to be served with a sprinkling of chopped parsley and some very thin slices of lemon. A sole cooked in this way is a **Sole à la Meunière**.

Paper-bag cookery is explained in the chapter on Entrées, where a recipe will be found for **Red mullet**.

With these typical prescriptions in her mind, and with the aid of the chapters on sauces and vegetables, an aspiring cook will have no difficulty in giving her

household a widely varied succession of fish dishes throughout the year. I warn her once more, however, against putting forward a large and plain piece of fish as practically the whole of a meal. It is because they remember some dinner in boyhood, consisting of nothing but a boiled cod, with potatoes and parsley butter, that many Englishmen do not greatly care to taste another fish so long as they live.

CHAPTER VIII

ENTRÉES

It is to be hoped that the greater simplicity of living imposed upon us by the War will lead to the simplifying of **dinner-table terms**. Cooks have never been as bad as gardeners, who give the ugliest names they can think of to the loveliest flowers. Still, there is room for improvement. While Soup and Fish and Roast are good enough words for anybody, it is impossible to feel grateful for such terms as Hors d'œuvre, Entrées, Relevés and Entremets. They are far-fetched names, invented to express extravagances and elaborations which we have been steadily outgrowing.

I am not going to waste time discussing the derivation and history of the word "entrée." It is necessary, however, to have an understanding with the reader as to the sense in which the term will be used in this chapter. By an entrée I mean the **made dish, complete in itself**, which, on modern tables, follows the fish and precedes the roast. In the older practice, four entrées were supposed to be served, one of fish, one of flesh-meat, one of game and one of pastry. We will brush all this kind of thing on one side and confine ourselves almost entirely to entrées of meat and game. Before most of us were born,

there were supposed to be fully a **thousand different entrées** known to professional cooks ; and some hundreds have been invented in our own days. We have all heard that, although scores of so-called comic papers appear every week, there are not more than a dozen or twenty distinct jokes in existence ; and something similar might be said about entrées. Under hundreds of different names they are found to be mostly slight variations upon the same culinary themes. Patrons and cooks in their vanity have hungered after immortality through the invention of a new entrée ; but, like untrained explorers, they have too often given their names to territories discovered long before.

In this chapter I shall attempt nothing more than the making good of one or two defects in the kitchen routine of ordinary people. That is to say, I shall explain, by describing a few typical dishes, the principles on which innumerable entrées may be achieved.

It has just been stated that an entrée is a dish complete in itself. This means that it is exceedingly handy in houses where only modest service is obtainable. A good entrée may call for the taking of considerable pains ; but the pains are taken when there is **time to spare**. The hot lady whom we call a plain cook in England will sometimes tell you that "on-trays" are beyond her, and that she does not profess to go beyond roast joints. Now, where there is a

single-handed cook, or, worse still, a cook-general, the proper finishing off and serving up of a **hot joint** with gravy and vegetables is a far more formidable business than the making of a good entrée. Indeed, when I see a cook-general engaged in the operation of serving the conventional **Sunday dinner** of the middle classes, I feel almost ashamed to satisfy my hunger at the expense of so great a trial to a fellow-creature's wits and strength and temper. The hot joint is an institution more in need of reform than the House of Lords. For a very large family or house-party, who can eat it down to the bare bone, a hot joint is fine and wholesome feeding; but unfortunately it enslaves little households and sentences them to a weekly misery of **cold meat**, and **more cold meat**, and finally **hash**. With no more trouble, and at much less expense, three or four entrées, one each day, can replace a single joint with far more gains than losses to the general health and happiness.

Success in entrée-making will often require the carrying out of at least two distinct processes, and this is where the English cook grows impatient. Take, for example, the operation of frying vegetables and pieces of meat before putting them in the casserole or stewpan. By this action the cook seals the outsides of her materials so that their juices and flavours are not lost, or mixed with everything else. In many English **ragouts** this practice is neglected, with the result that one obtains an excellent gravy or broth containing meat and vegetables like tasteless rags. I must warn the reader that any indolent skipping of the **preliminary frying** in recipes where it is appointed will invariably result in failure. The cook who "can't

be bothered " to make an entrée properly had better go on scorching her cheeks on Sunday over the hot joint, and shivering on Monday over the plateful of cold mutton.

By reason of a defect in the English language, I have been forced to speak of frying in the foregoing paragraph, although the process in question differs from the true frying in a deep bath of fat so often referred to in other chapters. The deep bath of clear fat at a high temperature is not what is wanted when we set about to fry (or, as the French say, *faire revenir*) our meat and vegetables for a ragout. Without speculating on the origin of the curious French phrase, I will try to explain it practically. When a cook melts some butter or good dripping in a pan and, as soon as the fat is hot, lightly cooks her pieces of meat and vegetable therein, just long enough for them to take a nice brown colour, she is said to *faire revenir* the ingredients. Having said this, I shall rely on the reader to know what I mean whenever I refer to frying as a preliminary process, and not to use the deep bath except for dishes which are fried out-and-out, such as fried fillets of fish or apple fritters.¹

Our first entrées shall be of the order of **stews**, one of beef and one of mutton. Both of them will

¹ Some writers get over the difficulty by speaking of "dry frying" and "wet frying," the "wet" frying being the frying in a deep bath. I think "wet frying" is a dangerous expression, as we are fighting the English tendency towards soddenness.

be far better made in an earthenware casserole than in an enamelled stewpan. The casserole allows slower cooking and the meat is much less likely to stick to the bottom. Besides, the casserole can be carried straight to the table, thus saving the trouble of dishing up. A steaming casserole on a cold day has a homely look and puts everybody into the right mood.

Buy about two pounds of the parts of beef known as stewing beef or skirting. Free them from skin and fat. Cut them up, salt them, pepper them and dip them in flour. Take some good turnips and carrots and onions, prepare them, cut them up, season them, and dip these also in flour. Having melted some good beef dripping in a pan, you must now proceed to fry (*faire revenir*) all the pieces till they take the desired brown colour. Meanwhile, a small kettleful of water should have been rising to the boiling-point. Take the pieces of meat and vegetables out of the pan and lay them at the bottom of a warmed casserole. There will remain in the pan the relics of the dripping and the flour. Pour over these some boiling water from the kettle and work them up into a gravy, scraping everything from the bottom of the pan and mixing it with the water as much as possible. Pour this gravy into the casserole with some mace and cinnamon and a bouquet of herbs. There should be just enough of the gravy to cover the vegetables and meat. Let the contents of the casserole come for a bare second to the boil, then draw the casserole to the side of the fire or leave it over the feeblest heat of which your gas-stove allows. The slower the cooking the better ; indeed, the lucky person with a range or an old-fashioned hob may let the cooking continue for four

or five hours. From time to time, examine the mess with a wooden spoon and make sure that nothing is sticking. While the cooking must never cease, the heat must be much lower than boiling-point, in accordance with the old rule: "**A stew boiled is a stew spoiled.**" When you sit down to eat this entrée, you will find the meat and vegetables so flavoury that you will wish never again to eat the too familiar stew in which everything has gone to rags. Probably those who eat it with you will finish the meat and most of the vegetables, but some of the liquid may remain. You can make use of this on the morrow in dozens of ways, according to the materials which are on your hands. For example, you can boil some macaroni for not more than five minutes in plenty of boiling water, and, after draining it, transfer it to your thick broth and let it cook slowly, until it is impregnated with fine flavours and perfectly tender. Or, having fried more pieces of vegetables and meat, you can add them, with the new supply of gravy which results from the frying, to whatever is left in the casserole, of course bringing the old to the same heat as the new before mixing the two. As you will not wish to have similar dishes two days running, you can add a little red wine on the second day; or let the contents of the casserole be accompanied by a purée of potatoes, or Jerusalem artichokes, or of turnips, served in a separate dish.

The stew of beef just described is a very homely one for family use, and it can be made cheaper or dearer by varying the proportions of meat and vegetables. I have known a clever housewife with a large family who kept a stew of this kind in being for

five days without anybody beginning to feel that it was monotonous. On the last day it contained practically no meat, but was made substantial with some dried peas and haricot beans which had been soaked and swollen for twenty-four hours. Of course she dissembled her economy by serving the stew in different receptacles on three days and in the casserole itself on the other two.

We will turn from a ragout of beef to a **ragout of mutton**. I do not doubt that, at one time or another, a small loin of mutton finds its way into almost every house. At one end of the loin the chops are nearly all meat, but at the other end they degenerate into a big bone. I suggest that this bone-end of the loin be cut off and treated as follows:—

Peel half-a-dozen potatoes of middling size. Then make a **roux** and prepare a **bouquet**. You ought to know the meaning of both these terms, but, in case you were never taught or have forgotten them, I will briefly explain them both. A roux is made of flour fried in downright good dripping or in butter. I am not referring to the method of frying in a deep bath of fat but to frying in a pan. While the frying goes on, the cook stirs the mixture all the time to prevent the forming of lumps. You must use a wooden spoon. For a brown roux you put an ounce of butter to one dessertspoonful of flour. Melt the butter in a stewpan on a moderate fire, add the flour, stir briskly, and as soon as the colour shows quite brown, pour in little by little half-a-pint of stock. If you have no stock, water will do. If you are in a hurry, cold water or

cold stock can be used, though I think it is better hot. All the time you are pouring in the hot or cold stock or water go on stirring, stirring, stirring, until the roux is quite smooth. To make a white roux you ought to have a rather gentler heat than for a brown roux. Do not let the flour and butter become dark. Avoid browning, avoid lumpiness, and use a white stock made from the remains of a fowl, or from white dried haricots. For what is called by professional cooks a **roux blond**, cook the flour and butter not much beyond a biscuit colour and use water or white stock.

A **bouquet** consists of a small bay leaf, some thyme, one or two sprigs of parsley, and, if possible, some basil and some marjoram. You tie these tightly together with white cotton. Some people add a strip of lemon peel. I admit that this sounds troublesome, but, when a housekeeper has once got into the way of using a bouquet, it will seem as natural as using salt and pepper. Of course the tying of the bouquet with cotton is intended to facilitate its removal after it has done its work. If you cannot get a bouquet such as I have described, you can use **dried herbs** tied up in a piece of muslin; but you must take care that your dried herbs have not lost their savour. Many housekeepers buy dried herbs in foolish little cardboard boxes which seem to have been invented for the purpose of making them dryer than ever. It will be far cheaper in the end to buy good herbs and to keep them in little **air-tight** tins.

Having reached a good understanding about the roux and the bouquet, we can return to our mutton.

Put half-a-pint of brown roux into a stewpan; or rather make the roux in the stewpan there and then. Bring it to the boil. Put in your piece of mutton, with an onion (not too large), the bouquet, some pepper and salt and a clove. Boil all these things gently for half-an-hour. Then add your peeled potatoes and let the boiling go on for half-an-hour longer. For everybody who likes a potato, this homely dish is delightful. As for those who are satisfied with nothing but huge helpings of the best meat, they must not expect to lift more meat out of the stewpan than was put in.

The directions just given will apply to a knuckle of ham, with one exception. The ham being salt, you must omit the salt which was prescribed for the mutton.

For this stew, whether of mutton or of ham, you **do not** “*faire revenir*” the meat. The meat is too poor to seal and you let it give its virtues to the potatoes.

I will now be very bold indeed and will recommend an entrée which, at the first blush, will strike you as both difficult and extravagant. It is neither; and it has the charm of antiquity. Indeed it is one of the oldest dishes in the French cuisine and is called a **Galimafrée**. Historians differ as to the true Galimafrée, and I will not be dogmatic about it. Some say that it was a ragout of sheep's head and pluck; others that it was made from a steak of ham, about an inch thick, served with a great number of tender vegetables and moistened with white wine; others again, that

fowls were the principal ingredient.¹ I am going to describe an entirely different Galimafrée. Buy a small shoulder of mutton weighing not more than about three pounds and a half. If you feel that the task will be beyond you, ask the butcher to separate the skin from the flesh, making it plain to him that the skin is to be lifted all in one piece, so that it can be put back in its place. As his knives are sharper than yours, ask him at the same time to cut off the meat from the bone entirely. At this stage he will probably wish to argue with you, and will tell you that what you really wish him to do is to bone the mutton. Now the boning of mutton—that is to say, the clever separation of the meat from the principal bone—is a trick worth knowing, because it enables many excellent methods to be followed, especially with the leg of mutton; but it is not what you want for a Galimafrée, where the skin is detached from the meat as well as the meat from the bone, and where it is not necessary for the meat to come away in one piece. When these surgical operations are finished, you will mince the meat finely, you will mix with it a little chopped bacon, some chopped lemon peel and some fine herbs, and you will cook the mixture, moistened with a little stock in a pan, keeping it well stirred. Of course you will take care that it is not in the least sloppy. When, by taste and smell and sight, you perceive that it is cooked, you will build it into what

¹ As old-fashioned Frenchmen still express their contempt for a rambling sermon or speech by calling it a “galimafrée,” I suspect that the word could be applied in cookery to any hotch-potch. In my recipe, the name is appropriate because the meat is cut up and mixed with flavoury morsels and herbs.

I may call the empty shell of your shoulder of mutton, the bone forming a support. You will very carefully bring back the skin to its original position and will tie it in place with a string. Flour it all over and bake it in the oven just long enough for the floured skin to take a good colour, so that the whole appears to be an ordinary roasted or baked joint. This last stage of the process will be quite short, as the meat has been separately cooked. It would appear that this kind of Galimafrée was served with a sauce like Ravigote.

I am quite prepared to hear that the foregoing recipe will provoke mirth, and that most readers will flatly decline to spoil a good shoulder of mutton on such lines. But, as a suitable shoulder can be bought for half-a-crown, and sometimes for less, the dish is surely worth trying once in a lifetime. When I go on to say that it is economical, the scoffer will agree with me on the ground that a very little of it will go a very long way. In a sense, he is right. This dish admits of being eaten along with an exceptional proportion of vegetables; because the herbs and lemon juice and bacon, and the retention of all the gravy in the meat itself, make it very flavoured. In practice I find it both distinguished and economical; but of course this is a recipe to be followed only once or twice in the year.

I should have found it easier to describe the Galimafrée if I could have used the words **mince** or **hash** as the French understand them; but unhappily the mince and the hash are terms with evil associations in English households. So perhaps this will be a

good place for some short notes on the true hash and the true mince, in which economy is practised without causing disgust. Indeed the true mince is thoroughly relevant to this book, because it lends itself remarkably well to our great principle of economising by making intelligent use of what is already in the larder. Whatever your remains of meat may be, flesh or fowl boiled or roasted, grilled or stewed, you can go ahead.

My first advice to an English cook who wants to make a good mince is to take her **mincing machine**, to clean it thoroughly, and then to **lock it away** in a box or a drawer for the rest of the morning. Old-fashioned cutting and chopping and mincing with a knife may seem more troublesome, but when the quantity of material is small, it is really not much more bother than is required for mounting the machine and working it and finally cleaning it. Without the machine, one is much more careful to reject gristle and skin ; and the disagreeable **mushiness of the ordinary mince** is avoided. Chop up what you have. Add to it some pepper and salt and breadcrumbs, using one dessertspoonful of breadcrumbs to nine of your chopped meat and varying the salt and pepper according to the quantities used when the meat or game was first cooked. Take care that there is a little fat in your mixture. If you should have in the house an uncooked sausage, you would do well to draw the sausage meat out of the skin and to add it to your mince, taking care that you have at least five or six times as much mince as sausage meat. Chop up some parsley and a shalot if you have one ; but do not mix the shalot with the mince at first. Melt

a piece of butter in a stewpan and stir the minced shallot in it until it begins to brown ; then throw in the whole of the mince, add a teaspoonful of flour and the chopped parsley, and go on stirring for fully five minutes. You should have made ready a little good broth, or gravy, or the best stock you have managed to extract. Pour this in very slowly, using only a very small quantity—I cannot say how much, because I do not know how much mince you will be making, but not enough to make the mince look sodden. Now let the cooking continue for half-an-hour over a very slow fire or a very small gas-jet, keeping **the lid on the pan**.

You will understand that no mince can be **much better** than the meat or game from which it is made. But the trouble with lazy or incompetent cooks is that their minces nearly always turn out **much worse** than their ingredients. With a good mince, dozens of fine things can be done. For example, on a cold day, few things are more comforting than a **mince with mashed potatoes**. A good old-fashioned English way is to prepare some mashed potatoes, varying the butter and pepper and salt according to the fatness or leanness of your mince, and to build the potatoes up in a high ring in a round fireproof dish. By a ring I mean something like the circular forts of sand which children make on the seashore, with room to stand inside. The mashed potatoes are carefully raised up in this fashion, and the mince is neatly packed within it. By browning the whole affair in the oven, one produces something of the effect of a raised meat pie, but with a casing of potatoes instead of more expensive and less digestible pie-crust.

I come to **braising**. The cook who has made herself mistress of braising is in a position to practise the utmost economies, while producing some of the most covetable dishes. Braising is one of the most ancient of culinary processes. When prehistoric man came home to his cave with the kid which he had stolen, or with the wild piglet which his arrow had pierced, prehistoric woman soon learned to braise a dinner with herbs in a clay pot. She covered the pot with a rough lid of clay and heaped smouldering embers above it. True braising must always maintain the same old principles, and the best results are not to be obtained without the beating down as well as the rising up of a steady heat. The lid of a true braising-vessel is so made that it will contain glowing charcoal, which causes the meat and vegetables to be caught **between two fires**.

I recognise, however, the uselessness of upholding standards which few readers will follow. I must therefore assume that a true **braising-pan** is absent from most English kitchens and that the house-keepers who buy this book will not trot off to the iron-monger's to make good the defect. We must do the best we can with our stewpans and casseroles. The Germans speak of braising by a name equivalent to our word "smothering," by which they mean that braised meats are smothered in an aromatic sauce and in an atmosphere of steam which cannot escape. It follows that the lid of the vessel must fit well. When the vessel is placed in an oven, a great deal of heat strikes down from the **oven-top**, thus doing some of the work performed by the glowing charcoal in a true braising-pot. There are times, however, when

the top heat may be dispensed with, and when it will suffice to apply bottom heat only from a gas-jet to a well-covered vessel.

At this point we are on the threshold of a great principle in cookery which will enable the novice to escape many a familiar disaster. I will try to express the principle by roughly stating the great difference between a "sealed" ragout and a dish of braised meat. In a sealed ragout, as I have already explained, we fry our pieces of meat and vegetables so as to seal up their juices. When braising, on the other hand, we endeavour to impregnate our slices of meat with the flavours of a kind of sauce which is called a **braise** or a **mirepoix**. A braise or mirepoix is a strong and important blend of gravy, both animal and vegetable, while the liquid in a ragout is generally mere water or a stock of no marked flavour. In a ragout we keep the surrounding liquid out ¹; in a braised dish the meat gently draws it in.

I will give a simple illustration of braising. One night a friend asked me to go with him to his house, which had been closed for a week. The house stood right out in the country, and there was no inn within two or three miles. Knowing that, after making his round of the little property, we should have an hour or two to kill before we could get a train back to town and to a decent meal, my friend took with him from

¹ The kind of ragout called an Irish stew is an exception, as it aims at giving flavour to the potatoes.

London a neat packet of ham sandwiches. We unlocked the cottage and opened the windows, but had hardly finished our inspection before the sky darkened and a cold rain began to fall. We unpacked our sandwiches. They had been cut in the kitchen of a well-known hotel and no less than half-a-crown had been charged for them ; but those sandwiches looked extremely dreary in the chilly twilight. A happy thought came to me. In the kitchen I had noticed a small, shallow casserole. While my accomplice broke up an empty packing-case and kindled a merry little fire, I foraged in the pantry and the store cupboard. The shelves were almost bare, but I stumbled upon a bottle of Marsala. The cork had evidently been first drawn nine or ten days before, but this was a powerful Marsala and was still fit to drink. I found also some tomato catsup—perhaps a tablespoonful and a half, at the bottom of a screw-stoppered bottle. We washed some plates and dismembered the sandwiches, putting each man's bread-and-butter in a little pile, and forking together the slices of ham. I chopped up finely a little of the fat of the ham and put it at the bottom of the casserole to melt. The melting was not entirely satisfactory, but it might have been worse. By leaning out of the kitchen window I easily gathered three or four nasturtium seeds which were still young and tender. These seeds were minced up finely and were thrown into the casserole with a mixture of Marsala and tomato catsup. We laid in the liquid a slice of ham, and covered it with a crisp little curling leaf from a lettuce which was growing not half-a-dozen yards from the scullery door. Upon the lettuce we laid more ham

and more lettuce until no more ham remained. By this time the fire had been coaxed into good order and was burning, or rather smouldering, quietly. The heat needed keeping up with bits of less dry wood, but we managed to do this without letting it blaze.

Although the lid of the casserole fitted well, the kitchen soon grew homely with goodly vapours. When the pot was opened, our hearts began to sing. The escape of steam had been small, and the ham had played a fine game of give-and-take with the sauce. The sauce had cut away the grossness from the fat ham, and the ham had softened the sharp temper of the sauce. Two hours later, when we were safely back in town, we made the experiment of ordering for supper some *jambon braisé au Madère* ; but it was not to be compared with what we had eaten at a deal table, with the rain drumming on the leaves in the windless twilight.

If we had reversed the casserole lid, and had filled it with red-hot embers, our dish would have been an example of the truest braising. The reason why we did not use top as well as bottom heat was that the result would not have repaid the extra trouble. The top heat is wanted for fairly large pieces of meat, or for birds, rather than for meat in slices. Towards the end of the process of braising, which must be as long and slow as possible, the sauce or mirepoix is reduced in volume and the top of the meat appears above the surface, like the summit of Mount Ararat after the Deluge. If, at this stage, the top heat is applied, it browns the meat and gives to it that very slight caramel-like **taste of fire** which is acceptable to the palate of every woman and of nearly all men.

In my own practice, I use the simple method of braising just described for all kinds of materials and on all sorts of occasions. It turns many a poor and dry little slice of meat into a dish fit for a queen, or even for a prima donna. Still, I know that braising is conducted on rather **different lines** by cooks far more intelligent and accomplished than I can hope to become. These cooks give directions which should often be followed, especially when one is dealing with larger pieces of meat or game which cannot be sliced or cut small. Melt a little bacon or butter or good dripping at the bottom of a roomy stewpan. While it is slowly liquefying, mix together a number of **little dice** which have been cut from a turnip, some carrots, a big onion and a stick of celery. The usual advice is to have equal quantities of dice from all four vegetables, but I have often varied them and have added dice cut from Jerusalem artichokes, from leeks, from sea-kale, from salsify and from tomatoes. Lay these dice to a depth of nearly two inches in the bottom of the stewpan, tie up a mixture of herbs in muslin and throw the little bag, with reasonable pepper and salt, on top of the dice. Before putting the meat to rest in this fragrant bed, trim it carefully and give it a dusting of flour. [Some pieces of meat will require tying round neatly with tape, in which case you will, of course, use a tape that has not been injuriously coloured.] **Heap more dice on the meat.** Put the pan on a fire that is not too slow, and cook the contents for twelve or fifteen minutes, the pan being covered with the lid. Taking a wooden spoon, you must occasionally prevent the dice of vegetables from sticking to the bottom of the pan, unless you have

a wrist strong and skilful enough to give the right kind of a shake, which is better than stirring with a spoon. As soon as the meat shows by its brown colour that the cooking has well begun, pour in some broth, or broth and wine, or plain stock, or even water, using no more than will just drown the bottom layer of vegetables.

Replace the lid and let the cooking go on for three or four or even five hours, according to the size and kind of meat you are using. Remember that while on the one hand the cooking must not cease for a moment, on the other hand it must never go beyond the **gentlest possible simmering**. A range with a coal fire is better than a gas-stove for braising, as a far gentler simmering can be effected in a pan drawn almost away from the fire. Further, I find a casserole worlds better than any other vessel. If you conduct the braising in an oven, so as to benefit by the top heat from the oven roof, you are advised by the best cooks to cover the top of the meat with a sheet of greased paper. I have never been in love with this device, as paper is not always all one would like it to be. I use a rather deeper casserole than is usual, with plenty of head room for the vapours and I do not find my little messes any the worse. Of course I take care to glance at the meat now and then and to baste it with the liquid whenever it shows signs of becoming too dry.

When the braising is finished, the meat must be lifted out of the sauce. In a clean and much smaller pan, the sauce must be brought to the boil and kept at boiling-point for a few minutes. Some hot water or stock can be added if the original sauce has become

excessively reduced. The boiling will bring the grease to the top. As soon as the grease has been skimmed away, the sauce is poured over the meat, which is at last ready for eating.

With these two ways of braising at your fingers' ends, your shopping will become a new experience. Where you have been accustomed to confine yourself to a narrow range of materials, you will find yourself yearning to make new experiments. The cookery-books will tell you how to braise the cheaper cuts of mutton, and liver, and sheep's tongues, and many another neglected cut or morsel. But, over and above the books, ideas will come to you.

Of course you will not braise greasy materials. Salmon, for example, does not invite braising. Yet **some kinds of fish**, after they are caught, take to braising as they took to water when they were alive. One night I ate with some friends a turbotin, or chicken turbot, which had been **braised in Chambertin**. It was served with a cream of mushrooms sharpened by a few drops of lemon juice. This sounds extravagant ; but an almost equally good result could be cheaply obtained with a shillingsworth of fish and mushrooms and a few pennyworth of sound Macon Ordinaire.

The housekeeper who will take the trouble to understand the use of **curry** and the boiling of **rice** will have travelled a long way on the path of wisdom. It is important to go to a good shop and to get genuine

curry and to study the directions which the shopman is nearly always ready to give you. Some years ago an Anglo-Indian advised me always to **cook curry powder** in a pan with a little butter and flour just before using it, and I have never regretted following his advice. Too many cookery-books treat curry as if it is to be merely thrown into any appropriate concoction, as one throws in a small handful of salt. And not less important than the curry powder is the rice. Colonel Kenney-Herbert, who wrote several valuable books about cookery, learned in India the best way of **boiling rice**. His method is simple. Having prepared three ounces of good rice, by sifting it and washing it well, put it into a pan where a quart of water is already boiling. If you add to the water the juice of a quarter of a lemon you will get a whiter mess of rice in the end. Do not oversalt the water, as is usually done in England. A teaspoonful for the quantity we are discussing should be the maximum. The rice must be boiled with the lid off the pan. Introduce frequently a wooden fork, such as is used for salads, and stir the rice so that it will move freely in the water and will not stick to the pan. In rather less than a quarter of an hour the rice should be cooked. Test it by taking a grain and squeezing it. The grain should be tender without losing its form. The moment you find that the boiling has gone far enough, stop it by throwing in a cupful of water. Drain away all the water, leaving the rice in the pan. Put the pan back on a gentle heat and cover it with a napkin, so that the heat will be retained while the moisture is absorbed. Give another occasional stirring, so as to keep the grains well separated. If you

have performed this simple operation properly, and if you have used the right kind of rice—namely, the **Patna rice**,¹ which is white and large-grained and shapely—you will be looking at a beautiful sight as well as at a cheap and useful food.

Almost every kind of food can be curried. And curried dishes lend themselves to economy for a further reason. When a curry is served, there ought to be plenty of it, but it should not be followed by other cooked dishes. I have been present at a long meal in which the curried entrée was followed by a delicate roast and an admirable champagne of the 1900 vintage, both the food and the drink being ruined by the curry. We can quite properly lead up to a curry, through hors d'œuvre and soup ; but we cannot follow it except with refreshing fruit or with a savoury as ardent as the curry itself. A housekeeper with a good instinct for her work will therefore serve curries **not too often** but, when the occasion comes, **lavishly** and to the exclusion of almost everything else, thus saving both labour and expense.

I have found the following materials wonderfully good when they are curried:—aubergine, beef, cauliflower, chicken, crab, eggs, most kinds of fish, mutton, rabbits, cold turkey, turnips, and veal.

Although a **Salmis** of game often figures in menus at restaurants, it is too rarely met with in English

¹ In 1911-12 a caterer, who wished to do the right thing, was found by a friend of mine to be buying both Patna and Carolina rice; but he used the "Patna for Puddings" and "Carolina for Curries" with lamentable results.

home cookery. It is essential to a true salmis that it should be made of game which has been **roasted beforehand**. If you should follow the directions about to be given without having first roasted your game, you might produce an enjoyable result, but it would not be a salmis. By visiting the poulterer regularly you will often be able to buy game as cheaply as meat, and this game, when worked up into a true salmis, will go a long way, besides satisfying your reasonable desire for variety and distinction. And there is another respect in which a salmis becomes a money-saver. Let us suppose that somebody has sent you a brace of birds and that, after being served roasted, a fair amount of meat remains on the bones when they come back from the table. By buying and roasting one more small bird (not necessarily of the same species) at the cost of about a shilling, you can make a salmis large enough for four persons. Again, if you happen to have a little roast mutton you may cut this up into rather thick pieces and it will so take the flavour of the game as to make the salmis quite good enough for six persons.

Here is the method. At the bottom of your stew-pan put at least two ounces of butter and add a tablespoonful of flour. Cook them, stirring them all the time, until they melt together and take a good brown colour. Pour in very gradually a gill of stock and a gill of good wine. [I must explain that, if you are able to do it, the stock should be well made from the skeleton of another bird. The wine must be red wine if the flesh of your game is dark, and white if the flesh be light.] Next, add pepper and salt, a bouquet of herbs, two shalots (not cut

up) and the carcass of your game-bird, from which you have carefully cut the limbs and all the meat, except such as could only be detached in pieces of insignificant size. You do not at this stage put in the meat and limbs, but you boil everything that is in the stewpan for half-an-hour, taking care that it does not boil at all fiercely. Then you pour the contents of the pot or pan through a colander—not a sieve—so that the shalots and bouquet and bones remain behind. Pour the liquid back into the pan, and bring it once more to boiling-point. At the first bubbling, drop in all the good pieces of game and withdraw the stewpan immediately from the fire. Squeeze a little lemon juice into the liquid, replace the pan lid without delay, and stand the pan where it will keep warm but will not even simmer. The reason why simmering-point must not be reached is that **everything by this time is cooked**, because your game had been roasted before you dropped it into the boiling gravy. It would not do, however, to serve the salmis immediately. It must stand on the warm hob or in a tin of hot water for half-an-hour longer, so that the pieces of cold roast game may be warmed through by the surrounding gravy and so that they may become impregnated with the flavours of the wine and the herbs and the shalots and the condiments. The finished salmis is often served with a **good decorative effect**, at practically no extra expense, each wing or leg or other good piece of game being placed on a rather thick piece of toast. The toasts are arranged on a very hot dish and the gravy, which is smooth and thick, is poured over them, with crimped slices of lemon encircling the whole.

In homely and unceremonious circumstances you can apply the principles of a salmis to roast meat or to a mixture of roast meat with such cheap game as rabbits. A week before I began to write this book, I helped to eat a salmis of rabbit and veal which did not cost more than fourpence for each person, although the portions were ample and the finish of the salmis was worthy of a professional cook.

It will be worth while to glance back over this chapter and to note the resemblances and differences in the directions for the various stews, braises and similar preparations. I have told you of a stew in which the solid ingredients are sealed by frying ; about another stew in which the meat is not sealed but yields its juices and flavours to some potatoes ; about some braised meats which absorb the sauce in which they are cooked ; and about a salmis of unsealed but roasted meat warmed up in a gravy and flavoured by it. After reflecting on these points, an intelligent cook will discern the why and wherefore of some of the most important processes and she will become more and more independent of those **closely detailed recipes** which have discouraged so many beginners.

While I cannot include **paper-bag cookery** among the great processes, I recommend it to ladies who wish to do their own cooking in flats or in very small houses. The odours proceeding from a good kitchen are delightful at the right time and in the right place, but nobody wants the smell of cooking, however good it

may be, to invade a drawing-room or a bedroom. Paper bags certainly score so far as smells are concerned. It is also fairly claimed for them that they involve less labour, and that the food cooked in them loses little of its weight. All the same, I am sorry when I find anybody making a fetich of the paper bag.

As Mr Soyer himself admits, cooking in paper is no novelty. The first act of cookery which I committed in my green youth was simply the wrapping up of a newly caught and cleaned fish in a sheet of buttered paper and the cooking thereof in a kind of oven roughly formed of slabs of stone by the side of a lake. From that day onwards I have loved fish cooked in paper, and I think Mr Soyer did a good work when he introduced his special bags made of a paper which is tasteless and odourless and harmless.

A few **red mullet** will lend themselves admirably to paper-bag cookery, because this fish may be said to provide its own sauce when it is baked. From the liver of a red mullet there comes a gravy which no sauce cook could excel. Into a buttered bag you simply put the mullet with an additional large pellet of butter and a little salt. You cook the fish for about twenty minutes. The other kinds of fish may require more seasoning, such as chopped parsley, mushrooms, tomatoes and the like. A good paper bag will hold liquids also, and this means that you can use it even when you wish to cook a fish in sauce or stock or white wine.

Directions for paper-bag cookery are usually given with the bags and there is no need to repeat them

here. I must, however, remind the reader emphatically that the use of **a grid** is absolutely essential and that disaster will follow the placing of a bag on a solid oven-shelf.

If you have no bags in the house, you can fall back on the method which good cooks used before we were born. Cut a sheet of white paper, of good quality, into **the shape of a heart**. Place the paper with the point of the heart pointing towards you. Having trimmed and seasoned, say, a **loin chop**, lay it on the right-hand side of the heart. Of course you will have greased the paper all over. Fold the left-hand side over the chop and twist the edges of the paper together where they meet. Bake the bag and its contents on a grid, in a hot oven, for a quarter of an hour. You can apply the same method to **steaks**, to **veal cutlets**, to **kidneys**, to **liver and bacon** and to all sorts of cuts of meat and fish and game. But get it out of your mind that paper bags can take the place of all pots and pans. You must not, for example, use them for cauliflowers or cabbages or beans or artichokes or macaroni.

With the great processes well rooted in your mind, and with the paper bag for a change, you will soon be able to contrive a markedly different *entrée* for every day in the month. And if you will master the rudiments of good sauce-making, and will grasp the principles of garnishing *entrées*, I make bold to say that you will be able to achieve a different *entrée* for every day in the year. This would be too great a variety, as it would rob you of the pleasure of repeat-

ing a favourite dish ; but you might do worse than keep it before you as an ideal.

Having referred to **garnishes**, I will try very briefly to guide your studies. When you open a serious cookery-book by one of the great masters, you may be inclined to smile at the almost endless lists of dishes. On examining the recipes you will find that the variety is worked out from three opportunities. The culinary inventor's first opportunity lies in the great variety of materials, animal and vegetable ; the second comes through the variety of methods of cooking them ; the third (and this is the biggest of all) flows from the possibility of accompanying the cooked food with garnishes or sauces or a combination of both.

When a housekeeper whose ignorance of cooking is almost complete decorates a plate of cold ham from a shop with a few sprigs of parsley, she has made a true garnish. When she goes further, and arranges squares or lozenges of toast around a hash, she is garnishing again ; and when a millionaire's French chef surrounds a *Poultarde Wellington* with twenty little pyramids of vegetables all different, or presents a fish in a sauce made of wine and mushrooms and mussels and prawns and asparagus tips, he too is garnishing. As soon as we call to mind the enormous number of greenstuffs, and gherkins, and shell-fish, and small roots (such as radishes), and vegetables, big and little, and tit-bits (such as the livers of fowls), and mint and horse-radish, and literally hundreds of other things, we must cease to marvel at the thousands of combinations which are defined in the great manuals

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of cookery, and we shall cease to smile incredulously when we hear that new dishes are always being devised. Of course I am now alluding to genuine practice, and not to the sham novelties of advertising restaurateurs.

We shall best reach this book's goal of **economy without stodginess** if we continue to invoke our principle of using only those materials which we possess already in the larder, or can most easily obtain. Let the chapter on Sauces be read, and, as it is necessarily slight in a volume of this kind, let it be regarded as merely the beginning of study. Let the much fuller chapter on Vegetables be glanced through from time to time. Let the shelves of the pantry be scanned for pickles or capers or bottled sauces or Italian pastes, or remainders of the day's milk or breadcrumbs that would otherwise be wasted. And then, with stewed or braised or baked or roasted or boiled or steamed meat or fish or game for the centre, it will be easy to vary one's entrées cheaply, pleasantly, healthfully and almost without end.

CHAPTER IX

VEGETABLES

VEGETABLES were defined by a pert child at an examination as "The food eaten by Vegetarians." If the pert child meant to use the word "vegetables" in its widest sense, so as to include nuts and grains, he was right; but if his thoughts ran only on vegetables as commonly understood, the definition had precious little in it. My experience is that vegetarians do not eat ordinary vegetables much more largely than do we who prefer a mixed dietary. I have tried vegetarianism, as a young man, with a predisposition in its favour, and have eaten at least a hundred vegetarian meals under the auspices of true believers. On the whole, I believe that vegetables are better cooked in a meat-eater's than in a vegetarian's kitchen. Should this book happen to fall into the hands of any reasonable vegetarian, I hope he will glance without prejudice through the pages next following, and give my recipes a trial as I have given his.

English methods of vegetable cookery have been denounced rather more warmly than they deserve. In so far as we have a national "high cookery" in rivalry with *la haute cuisine Française*, it is based upon our preference for **the finest materials simply**

presented. This preference connotes a dislike for sauces and garnishes which might distract the palate from the prime joint or fine sole or freshly taken salmon which is being eaten. I do not intend, therefore, to blame our cooks for serving, with the best meats, plain water-boiled vegetables, provided they prepare them carefully. This book, however, is written in the hope that the most costly meats and fishes and birds will be bought less frequently, and it follows that a different touch must play upon the vegetables.

Unfortunately, as soon as they perceive our national defects, most young housewives fly too decidedly to the French extreme, and they cease serving plain vegetables almost entirely. Every pea or French bean must be *sauté* ; every inch of celery must be *au jus*. Every cabbage must be enriched with butter, and every cauliflower must be hidden under yellow sauce. This is a grand error. When they are at their youngest and tenderest, **peas** and **French beans** are best in the English way, by which I mean **gentle cooking** in not much more vapour than that which they themselves will supply. [I do not mean the stupid and lazy practice of throwing every vegetable into about the same quantity of boiling water, without regard to its age and condition.] **Celery** too can sometimes improve a dinner much more decidedly in its natural state, with the cheese, than when it is **braised in gravy**, although both ways have their merits. A perfectly grown **cauliflower** is better plain than dressed, when it accompanies an entrée or joint

which boasts a good sauce or gravy. And as for potatoes, if I were asked to recall the occasions on which I have enjoyed them most, I should pick out two without hesitation. The first was at a tiny cottage where small new potatoes were taken straight out of the ground, plainly boiled, and served with nothing but a little butter. The second occasion was when I lunched one day from four older but sound potatoes baked not too quickly in the oven. With these I did not even eat butter. Salt was the only extra, although it would be uncandid to conceal the fact that half-a-bottle of good St Emilion was emptied at the same time.

I do not propose in this chapter, any more than in the other chapters, to repeat what every cook knows or can easily learn from the books already in her possession. So I will lead out with instructions for preparing a vegetable which is too much neglected in England, although it is tasty and cheap. I speak of the **red cabbage**. This vegetable is seldom found in England except as a pickle ; and, even as a pickle, it is more often than not eaten in a tough and indigestible state. Having bought a sound and fresh red cabbage, I tear off and throw away the soiled and untidy outside leaves, exposing a firm and purple orb. With a sharp long knife I cut this orb into two equal halves. These halves when laid open are a pretty sight, the white hearts and the purple crinklings of the close-set leaves contrasting bravely. It is safer to purify the halves in salted water in the ordinary way, although the close growth of the outside leaves usually

protects the cabbage from vermin. The next stage is to cut out the tougher parts of the heart, where the stalk was growing into the cabbage. Then, with the same sharp knife, one cuts the cabbage into large thin slices. Two large Spanish onions are freed from their outside skins and are sliced up in the same way. Next, some cooking apples, of the same total bulk as the onions, must be peeled and cored and cut up into thin pieces. Meanwhile a casserole or stewpan should have been placed over a very gentle heat, with a lump of butter in it. Over the melted butter one gently piles up the slices of cabbage and onion and apple, moistening the whole with a good spoonful of vinegar and a small tumblerful of cheap red wine. If there is claret or Burgundy in the house which has been open a day too long, it can be used with the cabbage, and if it has begun to go slightly sour the quantity of vinegar will be lessened. A little brown sugar, some pepper and a little salt are to be added. The lid is placed **tightly** on the vessel and the cooking goes on for four or five hours, as slowly as possible. Now and again the contents of the pan should be turned over with a wooden spoon so that the butter is equally distributed. When the dish is ready, the onions and apples and cabbage will be found blended together in such a way that the apple and onion will hardly be recognised, while the cabbage will taste mild and refined. I serve this dish with very thin slices from a hot ham or from a baked piece of bacon, or with sausages on a cold day. When one can get into touch with a butcher who makes beef sausages really well, they go finely with this dish of red cabbage, although they are much cheaper than good pork sausages. If

the cabbage is not all eaten at one meal—and I ought to say that the recipe just given will yield several pounds' weight—it can be kept until the next day, as it is greatly improved by being warmed up once or twice. Indeed I have warmed up red cabbage five days running, and it got better every day. Some people dislike this dish of red cabbage at first, and a few dislike it to the end ; but those who acquire a taste for it sometimes become slaves to it and eat it too often, thus running the risk of getting tired of a dish which is delightful as a change though unsuitable as daily fare.

By using a firm **white cabbage** and white wine, instead of a red cabbage and red wine, the foregoing recipe can be used for a less tasty but more soberly coloured dish. In Denmark one often meets with something between the two, the principal ingredient being the darker coloured greens stewed in red wine.

Cabbages of the pale varieties lend themselves to many uses over and above plain boiling. You should study, in your bigger books, the famous dish called **Perdrix aux Choux** and apply it to such game-birds as are cheap and suitable. And you should take a pride in making good **cabbage soup**. And do not forget the **cold slaw** mentioned in my chapter on Salads.

Cabbages, boiled and salted, were prescribed by Hippocrates to cure colic ; and many ancient physicians regarded it as a remedy against all kinds of ills,

from paralysis to the drink habit. I believe they used red cabbage more than the other kinds.

Onions are mentioned over and over again in these pages. Indeed, if Divine Providence should be pleased to grant me a long enough life, I shall hope to write the Book of the Onion. It requires courage to make such an announcement, because many gross and selfish persons have failed to restrain themselves from munching raw or pickled onions until, in the language of Dr Thudichum, they become "bearers of exhalations objectionable to polite society." The grossness of low persons is not, however, a valid argument against the right employment of the foods which they abuse. It would disgust an Englishman to see an Eskimo greedily devouring raw fat meat, but it does not follow that the disgusted Englishman ought to turn vegetarian for the rest of his life. A drunken navvy is an ugly and pitiable sight, but a temperate man is still justified in drinking a glass of young Moselle. I shall therefore make no more apologies for the onion. On the contrary, I should like to trumpet its virtues. One of the most exalted ladies in the United Kingdom, whose youthful bloom is envied by professional beauties twenty years her junior, makes a point of eating a boiled onion every night just before going to bed. I know a high dignitary of the Church whose face after a long life of worries is as fresh as a yeoman's because no day of his life passes without a dish of onions. Not that onions are remarkably nutritious. **But nutrition is not everything.** Onions contribute to the system certain salts

and other elements of inestimable value. It used to be said that these elements dispelled fatigue after long marching or hard riding. It was also believed that **onion soup** would soon restore the equilibrium of a man who had drunk too much. I have no direct experience on these points, but I am persuaded that an onion is a good gift from heaven.

The large onions from **Spain and Portugal** are best for use as an out-and-out vegetable, while the small round onions should be used in such entrées as a *Poulet en Casserole*. To prepare an ordinary dish of boiled onions, cut off the roots and tops of some Portuguese or Spanish specimens, remove the dark skin, and **blanch** them. Blanching is effected by putting the onions in a saucepan of cold water, and bringing the water to the boil. This water is thrown away, and the onions, after being rinsed, are laid in a panful of salted water which has just reached boiling-point. If they are very large they ought to be cut in halves before blanching. They must be boiled in the second water for two hours, or a little less if they are small. By pricking them with a fork it is easy to know when they are tender. It is necessary to drain them well and sometimes even to put them back in the empty saucepan and let them dry by the side of the fire. They can be eaten with a lump of butter and plenty of pepper and salt, or with white or brown sauce, or with hot finely minced meat.

Onions stewed in good stock make a vegetable entrée worth eating. The cook boils them quickly in salted water for about five minutes, then drains them in cold water. They are next laid in the pan with a pint or so of dark stock and about an ounce of beef

dripping or butter. Like plain boiled onions, they must cook for about two hours, stewing slowly by the side of the fire. Some cooks take a little cornflour and make it into a smooth paste with some tomato sauce, stirring the paste into the stock a few minutes before the onions are to be put on the table. Of course the stock is poured over the onions and served with them.

I have often stewed onions in one water only and have found that, while retaining their goodness, they lose their strong smell as much as if they had been blanched. For example, I have broken up good onions and have gradually reduced them in good white sauce almost to a cream. By rubbing the purée through a sieve I have made it perfectly smooth and have completed the illusion by adding a tablespoonful or two of fresh cream from the dairy. When this purée of onions is carefully made (either blanched or unblanched) it will be fairly stiff and has a handsome appearance. In the company of a French gourmet I have eaten it spread on toast, but most people would prefer it along with a well-grilled chump chop or a small tender steak.

Although—or because—**potatoes** are eaten nearly every day in the year by British people, I shall not say much about them. Housekeepers should be reminded not to peel them too deeply, as careless peeling wastes not only the body of the potato but the best of its soul. In performing the very common action of boiling potatoes, we should be careful to see that the boiling is fast. I have known many a poor

Irish charwoman beat a highly paid English cook at boiling potatoes, simply because she knows this secret by instinct. We must also try to learn the gauging of salt for varying quantities and qualities of potatoes. A little boy defined salt as "the stuff that makes the potatoes taste nasty when your mother forgets to put any in." Salt omitted in the boiling cannot be replaced by simply sprinkling dry salt on the potato after serving. On the other hand, an excess of salt cannot possibly be taken out. These are obvious truths but they are too often ignored.

Steamed potatoes retain the nutriment better than boiled potatoes. They should be sprinkled with salt and steamed in an ordinary steamer placed at the top of a saucepan and covered with the saucepan lid. The water must boil fast, so as to generate plenty of steam.

When you have an excess of good dripping in the house, wash and brush and peel some potatoes and boil them for about ten minutes in enough slightly salted boiling water to cover them. Drain them, powder them all over with fine flour, and lay them carefully on some melted dripping in a baking-tin. In an oven that is not too hot, bake them till they show a handsome brown colour. To ensure their being cooked right through, turn them over once or twice during the half-hour or so of their stay in the oven. Do not let them come to the table greasy.

Everybody likes a **potato in the jacket**—or, as the French say, *en robe de chambre*. I have cooked potatoes of all ages and sizes in this way, from the tiny new potato no bigger than a marble to the giant which is just passing out of its prime. Of course the

coats must be well cleaned and all specks and eyes must be nipped out. One method is to put them in a pan with enough salted boiling water to cover them, to replace the pan lid, to bring the potatoes to the boil and then to let them simmer for nearly half-an-hour, until the pushing in of a skewer shows that they are cooked. The water is poured away, and the potatoes are drained through a hot colander. They are placed once more in the pan, with a folded towel over them instead of the lid, and are set beside the fire so that the towel can absorb any remaining moisture. Another way (which I prefer) is to clean the skins and then make the potatoes perfectly dry. Next, the skins are pricked and the potatoes are put into a moderate oven until they are cooked right through. This sounds so simple that a novice will wonder how any cook could carry out the process wrongly. Yet I have seen more failures than successes. For some reason, many cooks lay the potatoes on the lowest sheet or grid of the gas-oven, and they sometimes leave the potatoes baking as long as the big joint which they are to accompany. The result is that the potatoes come out with toughened skins and sodden insides. It is best to place the potatoes on an upper shelf and to cook them for not much more than an hour. The skin ought to be thinner than the shell of a hard-boiled egg and ought to come off quite as easily, while the potato itself should be delightfully mealy right through.

Fried potatoes must be fried in the true way—that is, in the bath of fat. Some people fail with them because they do not dry them thoroughly before immersing them and do not drain them when they come

out of the bath. It costs no more to cut them up, before frying them, into ribbons or straws or little rods like matches. Many cooks, after frying potatoes in these pretty forms, put them into an air-tight box and keep them for warming up when they are required ; but I have never been able to congratulate them upon their achievement.

When you have some cooked potatoes left over, you may cut them in slices a quarter of an inch thick and brown them on both sides in hot butter or good hot dripping. By shaking the pan and tossing them until they jump you obtain the true *pommes sautées* (of course, from the French *sauter*, meaning " to jump ") which are one of the chief delights of home cookery and one of the chief terrors of the cheap little restaurant. By the way, the process in this paragraph should be contrasted with that described in the paragraph preceding it as illustrating the difference between true frying and mere browning.

I shall pass over the forty or fifty more familiar ways of treating potatoes as explained in the ordinary cookery-books, and shall give only one more potato hint which can be applied economically in all kinds of different circumstances. In the best restaurants of all countries there is a dish, unknown to the nineteenth century, called a **Filet de Sole Otero**. To make it properly one must have a Dover sole, and shrimps and truffles, and Parmesan cheese and butter on a rather expensive scale ; so I will give the recipe only in so far as it can be used with cheaper fillings. Pick out four large and handsome potatoes which will lie on their sides without wobbling. Bake them as directed in the last paragraph but three, but let the

skins become a little tougher than I have recommended for an ordinary baked potato. Cut a neat oval in the topmost side of each potato and carefully scoop out as much of the inside as you can take away without allowing the skin to break or collapse. Mash up the insides which you have removed and give them a good seasoning of pepper and salt and butter. Now begin to refill the skins with the broken potato. After putting in a small layer, add any suitable morsels of hot fish, or well-stewed kidneys cut up small, or anything else that will not be difficult to get out again when the dish is eaten. Put in more of the seasoned potato. If you have some good and suitable sauce—Sauce Mornay, for instance—pour it in. When the potato is full, it is a good thing to sprinkle a little grated cheese on the top and to brown it under a salamandre or under the deflecting griller of the gas-stove. This “Otero” potato can be quite a cheap little luxury, and it gives great pleasure to those who have never seen it before. I once made it for some children and delighted them greatly by sending the potatoes to the table with a sprig of holly upright in the first, a cutting from a fir-tree in the second, a tiny spray of bramble leaves of magnificent autumnal hues in the third, and a chrysanthemum in the fourth. The children had been in delicate health and were known to have wretched appetites, but they ate their potatoes down to the skins.

Sea-kale is dearer than potatoes, but you buy it in smaller quantities, and you ought, when it is at its best, to include it in your menus. A famous cook

serves it with Sauce Mornay, but it is better plain (not over-boiled) with hot butter.

Salsify, either fried or *sauté* or *à la crème*, makes a dish good enough to be eaten by itself. As there are still many men and women in England who have never tasted this racy vegetable, its appearance on the table arouses interest and gives you a chance of greater simplicity in the rest of the dinner.

That very ancient vegetable, the **leek**, ought to be cultivated more abundantly in England now that we are determined to raise more of our own food supplies. It is in season throughout the months when the kitchen most needs this kind of thing. The Egyptians worshiped the leek as a divinity. Some people say that it is a fine plant for the liver, and that it is also valuable in diseases of the chest. As the leek is milder than the onion, nobody can reasonably object to it when it is properly cooked. The oldest recipe I can find directs us to take the mildest leeks we can get, to cover them with young cabbage leaves, and to cook them under the hot embers, serving them in a dish with gravy, oil and wine. I do not expect every reader of this book to rise straight up and hunt for cabbage leaves ; indeed I am not sanguine that many people will be willing to make experiments with leek cookery in any direction. Here, however, are some instructions for the treatment of leeks in a manner which seems unknown in England. I have the recipe from a Frenchman who told me that the dish was

called a **Flamiche**. He said that it was a special dish of the north, but I could not find out whether he meant the north of France or the north of Europe, and it is only since beginning to write this book that I have traced it in the old cuisine of Picardy.

Take four or five good leeks and cut them into dice the night before you want the Flamiche. Lay them in salted water, throw in a few drops of vinegar, and leave them to blanch. Next day, prepare a paste as for "short crust." Put into a casserole a good ounce of butter and a dessertspoonful of flour. Let the flour take a good colour; add less than a third of a pint of boiling milk. Chop up the blanched dice of leeks finely, put them in the casserole and let them cook with the milk and butter and flour for about thirty minutes. You will find that the cooking reduces the liquid, but you must have ready the yolk of an egg with which to bind the mixture. Roll out the paste to the thickness of a quarter of an inch, lay it in a shallow tin, leaving plenty of overlap, pour the cooked leeks in the midst, and fold the paste over, pinching the sides together. Bake it in the oven as you would an apple turnover. This Flamiche is a boon to housekeepers in families where Friday is religiously observed. It is best hot.

Trimmed leeks, which have been split down the middle and soaked in cold water and a little vinegar for about half-an-hour, are drained and cut up and washed in cold water and transferred to a glazed casserole in which there is enough stock to cover them. With the lid on, a gentle stewing continues until the stock has almost all disappeared. The result is a dish of **stewed leeks** needing nothing more than salt

and pepper, with a piece of butter almost at the moment of serving.

Young **French beans**, when served with cutlets or roast meat, are best in the plain old English way. This vegetable, however, is so good that it should not always be considered a mere accompaniment to something else. Boiled and drained and then returned to the saucepan, in which some butter has been melted, French beans need only a seasoning of pepper and salt, with perhaps a little lemon juice and chopped parsley, to become a vegetable entrée of the best kind. For a change, this recipe may be modified by taking the beans out of the water while they are still not quite tender. They are then to be drained and put into a pan containing some melted butter. Flour is sprinkled over them—a dessertspoonful of flour to a pound of beans—and the pan is moved briskly about over the fire so as to toss the contents. About a quarter of a pint of milk is poured in and the beans are gently simmered until they are quite tender. Some people beat up the yolk of an egg with a little water and lemon juice and mix it well with the beans at the last moment.

While I do not wish to scold Englishwomen unreasonably, I cannot help telling a little story about the tasty and interesting dish known in French as *Haricots verts panachés aux flageolets*. I know a lady who met with this delicacy in tins at the shop of a French grocer in Soho, named Barron. She was delighted

with it and, although the price was high, it was to be seen on her table, even when fresh beans were in full season. Suddenly it disappeared from her menus. On my asking for the explanation I was told that Madam Barron had given up business and closed her shop, and that no other French grocer in London kept the same brand. This story is characteristic of the want of analytical faculty and resourcefulness which partly account for the monotony of English diet. Such *haricots verts panachés* make a delightful dish, but they are nothing more than French beans cooked with **flageolets**. I admit that fresh flageolets are rather difficult to meet with in England, but the dried kind can be bought in hundreds of shops at from sevenpence to ninepence a pound. In its native state, the flageolet is simply a little green kidney bean taken out of its pod in early childhood. Of course the dried ones must be soaked in water overnight. As the lady I have mentioned was in love with the tinned delicacy, I will base my recipe on the assumption that only tinned and dry materials are available. Having soaked some dried flageolets overnight, put them into a saucepan with enough cold water to cover them and bring the water to boiling-point. Some herbs and an onion will improve them. Let them cook until they are quite soft and then drain them, at the same time clearing away all traces of the herbs and the onion. While they are cooking, open a tin of good *haricots verts*, rinse them, and finally mix them with the finished flageolets. Put the mixture in a pan containing melted butter and complete the cooking on the lines of the two foregoing recipes, either with or without milk and flour and yolk of egg, accord-

ing to your taste. Working along these lines, a dish of *haricots verts panachés aux flageolets* will cost much less than the proprietary packings and will taste far better.

Some earnest persons, who have heard that this book is being written, are anxious that great prominence shall be given to **dried peas**. They are mostly men without palates, who believe every word of the advertisements which state that Messrs Growem and Sellem's dried peas are in every respect equal to young peas in June. I should rejoice with great joy if this were true. Unhappily, dried peas in January are certainly not as good as new peas in May. I will give the best directions I can for the use of dried peas, but the reader must not expect a superfine result. Soak a pint of peas overnight. Drain them, and rinse them in a colander under the cold-water tap. Pour them into a saucepan with enough cold water to cover them, and bring them to the boil. Add to the water some herbs and an onion cut into pieces. Cook the peas till they are tender. Should the water boil away too soon, add some more from a kettle. Drain the peas when they are tender, taking away the onion and herbs. Replace them in the saucepan with about two ounces of butter, a teaspoonful of sugar, and a seasoning of pepper and salt. If you have some really good stock, add about half-a-teacupful. Leave them on the fire just long enough for the extra ingredients to come well together and then serve the peas very hot. Eat them in a thankful spirit, remembering that better Christians

than yourself have sustained life on worse food than this.

Fresh peas are so good that the simpler the cooking the better. As they grow older, they can be prepared with shreds of lettuce, with spring onions, and even with thin slices of tender carrots.

Half-way between fresh peas and dried peas we have peas preserved in tins. The very cheap brands, especially those sold by oilmen and cut-price grocers, should not be touched with a long pole. Some of the cheap **Belgian marrowfat peas in tins** are much more satisfactory than smaller and finer-looking peas at higher prices. But, whatever kind you buy, never warm them in the tin. As certain tinned foods bear labels instructing you to stand the tin in hot water before opening it, some housewives follow this course with tinned peas. They must not do so any more. The peas must be poured into a strainer and thoroughly rinsed with boiling water. It follows that, after such treatment, they cannot make supremely fine eating, but it is better to lose a little flavour than to take some poison into your system. When I find myself obliged to use tinned peas, I cleanse them and then warm them in the upper part of a double pan, with a sprig of mint if I can get it, and some sugar and butter and salt. I cook them only until they are quite hot—that is to say, for two or three minutes.

Finding herself with a few scraps won from the remains of a cold chicken, and having in the house enough “short crust” paste to line a few pattie-pans, a clever cook could make novel **tartlets of peas and**

chicken to take the place of a more expensive vol-au-vent.

When we come to the **carrot** we are on shaky ground. According to a cookery-book published only a few months ago by a writer of repute, Miss Florence B. Jack, the carrot is one of the most useful and most nourishing of vegetables, although it is not one which is particularly easy of digestion. It is valuable both for flavouring purposes in soups and stews, and also for serving as a separate vegetable. It is more nourishing than the turnip, is rich in both starch and sugar, and contains many valuable mineral salts. On the other hand Dr Thudichum, who was a learned man in spite of his pedantry, wrote: "The most singular feature in the history of carrots is that, although they are eaten by man in various forms, stewed, boiled, as purée in soups and in ragouts, and introduced into most bouillons, consommés, braises, mirepoix, etc., yet they are perfectly indigestible, and pass through the alimentary canal almost in the same shape as that in which they have left the mouth after having been chewed. Notwithstanding their indigestibility, they are not known to cause any digestive derangement. The great affection which cooks and diners have for carrots can only be explained by their colour, which makes an impression on the eye, and their flavour and sweetness, which speak to the palate."

I think that Dr Thudichum was wrong. And I do not agree with another writer who holds that the principal use of a carrot is to be grated fine and used

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as a dressing for burns or chapped skin. All the same, a diet of carrots and nothing else would not produce a race of heroes.

Carottes à la crème may be considered carrots at their best. A famous French cook prescribes large and tender carrots to this end, but it is better to use small new carrots if possible. Blanch them for a few minutes in salted water, *sautez* them in butter on a slow fire, season them, moisten them with some stock, and, when they are half cooked, add some parsley and a little sugar if the carrots when raw seemed to have less than their proper sweetness. Give them finally a binding of yolk of egg mixed with a little cream, or with butter and flour well worked together, and serve them at once.

Carrots in the **Flemish fashion** should also be new. If they are large they should be cut in slices, but before this is done they must be blanched in boiling water for about five minutes and rinsed in cold water. The skin can easily be rubbed off with a cloth. English servants too often remove the best part of the carrot by peeling it with a knife. Of course the top and the tail are cut off and thrown away. For a pound of carrots you will require just enough boiling water to cover them, along with an ounce of butter, half-a-teaspoonful of sugar and the same quantity of salt. The carrots must be simmered, with the lid on the casserole, until they are quite tender. If you have not made the mistake of giving them more than the minimum of water, you will be well on the way towards success. Work together some chopped parsley with the yolk of an egg and as much cream as you can spare and add it to the carrots. Stir the mixture until it

thickens. The heat must be very gentle and the carrots must not come to the boil on any account.

What has been said about carrots can easily be modified by the intelligent reader to meet the case of **turnips**, so long as it is remembered that the addition of **salt toughens turnips** and takes away their colour. The ordinary English cookery-books give directions for making mashed turnips or purées of turnips, of both colours. At their best the yellow turnips can yield a most useful mash. Great care should be taken to get rid of the water. Draining through the colander is not sufficient and the vegetable should be dried for a few minutes in the pan.

Turnip tops are useful while they are young. At their very youngest they are delicate enough to use in salads.

Although I have set out to preach economy, I hope that no reader will go too far in trying to use nearly every leaf of her **Brussels sprouts**. Some cooks merely remove those leaves which are actually diseased, and, after cleansing the sprouts in salted water, proceed to boil them to death and to serve them discoloured and sodden like baby cabbages that have been racketing about all night. The proper way is to trim them until only the firm and hard part remains, which should be like a handsome, closely grown miniature cabbage, about the size of a walnut. They must be put into salted boiling water, or, better still, in a perforated steamer over boiling water, and cooked until, without

losing **their** firmness, they have become tender. Half-an-hour of boiling or steaming will generally be enough. If they are to be eaten with meat and gravy, they will be simply drained dry and served hot. If, however, they are required to accompany some rather dry meat, or to be eaten as a separate dish, you must put them back into the saucepan, having first melted therein one ounce of butter to every pound of sprouts. The butter must be very hot. The pan is kept by the side of the fire or over the smallest gas-jet and is shaken now and then during six or seven minutes. The saucepan remains uncovered from the beginning to the end of these operations, even during the first boiling. If you should boil the sprouts in a closed saucepan they would not keep their pleasant colour.

If Brussels sprouts are lifted out of the pan or steamer before they are quite tender, and are dried with a cloth and dusted over with salted and peppered flour, they can be fried. Each sprout must be dipped in a mixture of egg and breadcrumb till it is coated all over, and the frying must be true frying in boiling fat at least two inches deep. As always with fried tit-bits, the sprouts must be drained on paper and not a moment must be wasted in piling them on a very hot dish and sending them straight to the table.

One of the most remarkable of vegetables is the **cauliflower**. It was probably unknown in England until after the death of Oliver Cromwell. When I see some of the **overboiled** messes into which many cooks transform it, I wish that they had lived in the

Commonwealth's dour and cauliflowerless days. A cauliflower can be digested by invalids and yet it is full of points for the most enterprising gourmet. **White and compact heads** should be looked out for, as the yellowy or greeny specimens are **much** inferior.

Cut away the thick part of the stalk, taking care, however, that you do not risk the falling asunder of the branches. Strip away all the green leaves except the innermost and very delicate-looking curls of green. Let the cauliflower lie for at least half-an-hour in cold water in which you have mixed a little vinegar. This is to bring out the insects and other vermin. [You cannot be too careful on this point. In a French restaurant which was reputed to be good, I once passed through an experience which turned me against cauliflowers for many years.] Take the cauliflower out of its bath and rinse it well. Lay it in a steamer over a good volume of steam and cook it until it is tender. Or you can boil the cauliflower, in which case you will keep the water to make a soup—for example, the **Soubise** described in the chapter on Soups. Take great pains to guard against over-cooking. A cauliflower must never become a mush. It is hard to find a word in English to describe the ideal in this respect. The French use the word **croquant**, which suggests that the teeth encounter a pleasant little resistance, so that the cauliflower is crunched rather than bolted.

Some people pour their sauces over the cauliflower. This should only be done when the cauliflower is of bad colour or shape. It looks best served naturally, with the Hollandaise or other sauce **in a separate vessel**.

Your cookery-book ought to give you at least a dozen ways of dressing cauliflowers. They can be done as **fritters**, or **curried**, or **baked**, or **soufflé**, or **sauté** in little sprigs. One good and unfamiliar French method, although it sacrifices the desirable firmness and prettiness of the sprigs, is to work a well-steamed cauliflower through a sieve so as to get a *purée*, and to add to this two eggs, some thick cream, about an ounce of butter melted in a cup, and some pepper and salt. The mixture is turned into a buttered mould and is cooked in a *bain-marie*. Or breadcrumbs and stock may be thickened in a pan over the fire, butter and well-broken cauliflower being afterwards mixed well with them. After the mixing, the pan must be taken away from the fire and the yolk of an egg stirred in, with pepper and salt. A plain cake-tin, greased and coated nicely with breadcrumbs, should be standing ready. Froth up the white of the egg and add it to the mixture. Pour everything into the mould and bake it in a moderately hot oven. This kind of baking is best done by standing the cake-tin in a larger tin containing hot water. After about half-an-hour's baking you will have what the French call a **cauliflower loaf**. The egg will make it very light and tempting to an invalid. It can be served with or without sauce.

For days of abstinence, or as a comfortable extra dish on a day when you are serving very little meat, it is hard to improve upon a good **Choufleur au Gratin**. Having boiled a good cauliflower, drain it well, break it into a number of sprigs, arrange these in a fireproof dish, sprinkle over them some grated cheese—it is better to use **half Parmesan and half Gruyère**—and

some Sauce Béchamel. Powder again with grated cheese and some grated dry bread, pour some newly melted butter over the whole and make haste to *gratiner* the mixture under a deflector. This is a good method. Perhaps, however, it is more likely to succeed in a French than in an English kitchen, so I will give an alternative. Put the cauliflower (not over-boiled) in a buttered fireproof dish and pour newly melted butter over the pieces. Sprinkle the mixed grated cheese, taking care that it is evenly distributed. Pour on more of the butter. Sprinkle the finest raspings or crumbs of bread that you can get, **all over**, again taking care that the distribution is even. Again moisten with a little butter all over. Put the dish in the oven until the contents begin to show a slight browning and serve in the same fireproof dish. Certain English cooks proceed on almost entirely different lines, using water and flour and cream, but I think my two ways are better.

Crosnes, or Japanese artichokes, are getting cheaper in England every year, as we have learned that we can grow them easily and well. In my own tiny garden I once planted a handful in an idle moment, and was rewarded by getting a dishful of poetical little crosnes, with all the lustre of mother-of-pearl. Taken straight out of the ground, they have a better taste and a more delicate appearance than when they are bought in shops. As this is not exactly an economical vegetable, I never use it with a lavish hand. A few crosnes *à la crème* will give distinction to otherwise commonplace grillades. Or they can be served *sautés au beurre*.

They should be well washed in warm water to free them from any traces of soil and plunged into boiling water. Here the handy word *croquant* which I had to use in speaking of cauliflowers will come to our help. The boiling of crosnes must not go so far as to take away their *croquant* quality. After they are well drained, they can be laid in white sauce made with cream or milk and butter, warmed thoroughly and served as a separate dish.

Spinach is easier to digest than Brussels sprouts and cabbages, except when it is old. Most people prefer to eat it only when it has been rubbed down into a purée and enriched with butter or cream. A fair trial will convince most palates that spinach is better "en branches." Gouffé and other French writers prefer to speak of this style as **Epinards à l'Anglaise**, by which they intend a rap at our English inelegance. To cook it in this way, we must wash our spinach well in order to get rid of the grits, and we must free it from the coarser stalks and ribs. We ought to boil it in a very small quantity of salted water until it is tender, and serve it very hot, without mincing or sieving, with a piece of butter on top. I have tasted spinach made up into a kind of loaf or cake, but the recipe was an extravagant one, requiring four eggs as well as butter and cream, and the result was only moderately good.

Sorrel may be cooked on the lines of spinach, or, better still, you can gather it in the course of your

country walks and mix it with the spinach, letting the spinach predominate if possible. A good way is to wash both vegetables thoroughly ; to cook them in a saucepan with quite a small quantity of salted water ; to drain the cooked leaves and dry them well ; to chop them up fine ; to put them into a pan with some melting butter and stir the mixture over the fire till they seem to have become perfectly free from moisture ; to work in a dusting of nutmeg, a dusting of salt, an eggspoonful of sugar, a dusting of flour and, if you can spare it, some cream, and to let this final mixture simmer for twelve or fifteen minutes. This cream of sorrel and spinach should be eaten with little fingers of toast, like almost all soft preparations.

Cucumbers have been discussed in the chapter on hors d'œuvre. I should like to point out, however, that they are sometimes to be bought large and cheap. When this happens, it is a good thing to try them **fried**, or as a **soup**, or **à la crème**, or **stuffed**. A cooked cucumber is much more easily digested than a cucumber eaten raw. The seeds must always be scooped out : and if this can be done before the vegetable is cooked so much the better. To fry them you will boil drums of cucumber, having added a little salt and vinegar to the water ; you will take them out after about ten minutes and rinse them in cold water ; you will dry them in a napkin and give them a thin under garment of flour and salt and pepper and an overcoat of egg and breadcrumb. The frying must be done in the deep bath of boiling fat.

Or, having boiled and drained them, you can **stew**

the pieces of cucumber in stock or gravy. As for the **stuffed cucumbers**, these should not be the scraggy kind, curved like a bow, but should be short and **thick**. You take off the skin and boil the whole of the flayed cucumber in a fish-kettle or other long vessel for ten minutes. Then you lay it open lengthways and clear out the seeds. This being a watery vegetable, you dry it in a warm napkin. In the long trough which formerly held the seeds, you press a stuffing made according to what you have found in your pantry. The stuffing is better made of dark than of light coloured meats and should be as flavoury as possible. The first time I stuffed a cucumber there was nothing at hand but some potted beef and some tomato catsup and some breadcrumbs, but the outcome was not a disgrace. After filling the troughs, there is a choice of two methods. Some people do not rejoin the two halves but lay them in a fireproof dish well buttered and bake the two long pieces side by side, first putting breadcrumbs and a little butter all along the upper surfaces. Others press the two halves together and tie them with a tape in two places. Then they lay the cucumbers in a tin containing some stock. They cover the tin and put it in a moderate oven, occasionally taking it out and basting the cucumber with the stock. They cut and remove the tapes at the last minute and pour a good brown sauce over the cucumber.

If you have the right tool for worming out the seeds without cutting the cucumber open, you can introduce the stuffing after the fashion of larding ; but in small kitchens it is better not to attempt too much.

Tomatoes have established themselves so firmly in all English households that there is no need to say much about them. When you possess some beautifully ripe and sound and well-shaped tomatoes, it is best to put them on the table in all their handsomeness of form and colour. They can be eaten raw, like pieces of fruit, or they can be peeled at the table and sliced up with oil and vinegar and pepper and salt. Tomatoes which are not fully ripe can be sliced and fried, the slices having been coated with batter, or with flour, pepper and salt first, and egg and breadcrumb afterwards. A handsome little entrée is made by cutting the tops very neatly off some large and firm tomatoes and scooping out the pulp, afterwards filling them up with a meat stuffing. The pulp, freed from seeds, is worked into the stuffing so that nothing is lost. Care must be taken at all stages to avoid breaking the tomatoes. They are to be baked, in a buttered fireproof dish, for a quarter of an hour in a moderate oven. Some cooks sprinkle breadcrumbs on the tops of the tomatoes, adding a little butter and some grated cheese almost at the last moment, and finish off this entrée under a deflector or salamandre.

Although we ought to keep away from tinned vegetables as much as possible, I must admit that tinned tomatoes from a good shop are an enormous help to a cook in a small house. The peeled tomatoes are wonderful value for the small sum they cost. I have often, in an emergency, thanked heaven and the Italian people for this boon. A tin of tomatoes lends itself to the making of tomato soup in at least half-a-dozen good ways, and any resourceful person

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can improvise a sauce for fish or entrées when a tin of tomatoes is at hand. Of course nothing should be left in the tin after it is opened. Any surplus should be kept in an earthenware vessel.

Tinned tomatoes, merely peppered and salted and warmed up with a good piece of butter in a fireproof dish, are not to be despised.

Speaking broadly and generally, **cold remnants of vegetables** are to be treated with respect. A tidy housewife, with a passion for clearing up, may be inclined to throw away the single sprig of cauliflower, the half-ounce of mashed potato, the dozen or so of French beans which come back from the table. She must do nothing of the kind. Let her once form the habit of modifying her cookery according to the oddments in her pantry and she will find herself saving money and gaining efficiency every day. What will not do for hors d'œuvre may do for soup, and what will not do for soup may add not only to the bulk but to the charm of a stew or a salad or a savoury. And let it be remembered that potatoes are not the only cold vegetables which can be fried.

I know a housewife who is honestly bent on thrift. Yet her kitchen costs her far too much, simply because she lacks the right point of view towards vegetables. At her house, one will find a delicious leg of lamb costing a shilling a pound. It is served with about half the due proportion of vegetables. The result is that,

on a hungry day, appetites are satisfied with meat and vegetables averaging about tenpence a pound instead of with meat and vegetables working out at sixpence or sevenpence all round. Let vegetables therefore abound both in War-time and in Peace-time. They are natural, they are refined, they are healthful, and they are cheap.

CHAPTER X

ROASTING AND GRILLING

ROASTING and grilling have been twin glories of the English kitchen. Grilling is still understood and well practised among us ; but **roasting** is almost a lost art in town households. When we speak of roast beef we generally mean beef baked in an oven. **The Baked Beef of New England** eats well : but it is not a roast.

Brillat Savarin said that while one can learn to be a cook, one must be born a roaster. And even when roasting has degenerated into baking, an innate instinct for the process will go nearly all the way. In old-fashioned roasting it was customary to begin by keeping the joint thirteen or fourteen inches from the fire so as to draw out enough fat and gravy to form, a little later on, when the meat was brought nearer to the heat, a brown coat. In baking a joint the same principle should be followed. Modern cookery books generally advise the immediate introduction of the meat into a high temperature for the purpose of "sealing" in the juices. This is a good counsel, but it would be still better if it were prefaced by instructions to provoke a very slight preliminary cooking in order that the sealing may be done with what I may call the right kind of wax rather than by a

scorching of the outside of the meat, or with fat from another source.

Everybody knows that **basting** is essential to good roasting. But, when the sealing has been improperly done, the basting is almost useless, because the surface of the meat does not take it.

Joints which are about to be baked should not rest upon the floor of the baking-tin but upon an ordinary **trivet**, such as one always receives with a gas-stove. Without the trivet, the lower part of the meat would be standing in grease and would become sodden.

Novices sometimes dust their joints over with **salt** before putting them into the oven. This is wrong, because it hardens the fibres of the meat. The salting should be done when the baking is nearly finished.

With these few hints and warnings in your mind, you cannot do better than continue to roast or bake in the established English way. Do not believe all you hear in praise of certain patent roasting-machines or baking-boxes. I have tried most of them and have given them away to curates for jumble sales. It is true that tough meat can be made tender in some of these contrivances, but they are stuffy. The ideal roast is a beast or bird roasted before a **wood fire** in

the open air. This is not a fancy ; and any ill-ventilated cooking-box or oven works dead against the best principles of roasting.

Grilling or **broiling** is performed in most houses nowadays by using the deflector on a gas-stove. An old-world gridiron is better but it requires skill, especially in the management of the fire. Although very few readers of this book are likely to have a gridiron and a suitable fireplace, I must try to raise the banner of the ideal once more. Rough-and-ready teachers of cookery do not attempt to expound the inmost secret of grilling. They tell you to seal both sides of your chop or steak by exposure to a rather fierce gas-heat at the outset, and then to reduce the temperature and allow the meat to remain between the trivet and the deflector until it is cooked through. This process certainly turns out a very tasty little piece of meat, but it is more like a **miniature roast** than a **true grillade**. The proper way is to coat the meat lightly on both sides with good olive oil or freshly melted butter, and to grill it under a strong but not unruly heat, turning it with a small **pair of tongs** four or five times each minute. The object of this turning is to prevent the browning of the surfaces. Tongs must be used instead of a fork, because, in the absence of a firm sealing, a pair of tongs is the only tool with which one can avoid wounding the meat and allowing gravy to escape.

We must, however, be practical, and I do not press this best way of grilling upon those who are perfectly satisfied with the method usually taught : because

I know that the best way could hardly be followed on a small gas-stove.

We are giving less space to roasting and grilling than to steaming and braising and stewing, simply because roasts and grillades are rarely successful except when they consist of expensive cuts of meat, and this book is against such extravagances. An exception sometimes occurs as regards roasting, because it is possible now and then to buy good game-birds at low prices. Much of the cheap frozen game is not worth cooking or eating ; but bargains in fresh game are to be picked up occasionally. When they present themselves, they should not be neglected ; because roasted birds furnish materials for the cheap but distinguished **salmis** so fully described in the chapter on Entrées.

Grillades represent a heavy initial cost for prime meat, but they become cheap food provided that the consumers are content to flavour a large quantity of vegetables with quite a small piece of prime and succulent beef or mutton. Take, for example, the dish known as an **Entrecôte à la Bordelaise**. This is a grilled steak on which one spreads slices of blanched beef-marrow and some butter, with salt and pepper and chopped shalots and parsley and a little lemon juice. Some of the chopped vegetables and herbs are mixed with a glass of red Bordeaux wine and the whole *plat* is put to finish in a fireproof dish in a good oven. Of course you must not over-grill the steak in the first instance, but let it be underdone. [I am stating the rapid and homely recipe rather than the

directions which would be given by a chef.] For a total expenditure of about two shillings on the steak and wine and sundries and a large cauliflower, four persons can be sufficiently though not lavishly served. By using potatoes and French beans or scarlet runners or mashed turnips or Jerusalem artichokes, the dish may be made to go even further, as the gravy and sauce will suffice to make a liberal helping of vegetables quite tempting.

Grilled **kidneys**, grilled **mushrooms**, and the various grillades associated with the conventional English breakfast, do not need describing here. Besides, I hope that the War may lead to the simplification of our English breakfast, and that Englishmen will drop the habit of requiring cooks to work for them elaborately at the beginning of the day. Devilled meats for luncheon or as dinner savouries are on a different footing, and, when the Allies enter Berlin, I shall be happy to give to every reader who will ask for it a copy of my very own recipe for a dish called **Seven Devils**.

This short section shall be closed with some directions for **cooking a steak** in a manner which partakes of both baking and braising. In my own kitchen this method is frequently adopted and, nine times out of ten, visitors say that they have never enjoyed a steak so much before. This way is not for hot weather.

Melt in an oval fireproof dish, two inches deep, a bare ounce of butter. [We sometimes use a cocoanut butter—a special kind in which the taste of the nut

is not suppressed. Cocoanut butter goes a long way, and half-an-ounce is enough.] Trim about a pound and a half of rump steak, but do **not** remove the good fat. Flour the steak on both sides and fry it, also on both sides, in the fireproof dish, on the top of the stove, until it browns nicely. Then simply cover the dish **closely** and put it in a good oven. Reduce the heat of the oven (if it is warmed by gas) as soon as you close the oven door. At the end of half-an-hour take out and uncover the dish. The upper side of the steak will have become darker. Turn the meat over. Add one tablespoonful of hot water, mixing the water well with the butter and gravy at the bottom of the dish. Cover the dish **closely** again and put it back into a slow oven for another hour at least, taking it out once or twice more to baste and turn it. At the last turning, salt and pepper both sides. Should the gravy be finally found scanty and sticky, it can be extended with more hot water.

This is one more of the dishes which, although made from a prime and dear cut, may subserve economy. The cook who prepares it for the first time will be inclined to throw away a kind of liquid fat which will have formed in the cooking : yet this fat is delicious and it makes the vegetables taste so good that not much meat is needed for each person. Mashed potatoes, or a purée (not sloppy) of turnips or Jerusalem artichokes, or a cabbage, or a cauliflower, each and all lend themselves to moistening with the liquid. One does not throw away the liquor from good bacon, and it is just as wrong to throw away the liquor from good beef.

CHAPTER XI

SALADS

A FULL-DRESS dinner, more than any other function exhibits the complexity of civilisation. In order to bring together the hundreds of items essential to the meal itself and to the service and surroundings, thousands of men and women have worked hard and skilfully. Peasants have flogged olive-trees ; fishermen have braved the storm ; gardeners have stooped and delved under broiling suns ; shepherds have watched their flocks under driving rain ; hunters have waited wearily for the whir of wings ; dairy-maids have risen with the lark ; vigneronns have fought the thousand enemies of the vine. To bring the dainties of the world to our shores, dock labourers have strained their backs, and stokers have almost melted away before ships' furnaces. Merchants have knitted their brows, shopmen have stood through long days amidst delicacies they will never taste, and boys whose hearts are on the battlefield or the high seas have trudged hither and thither bent under heavy loads. Bees have hummed in the hearts of flowers to build up the candles, or dynamos have buzzed still more loudly to give floods of light. In Ulster, men and women have spun fine linen ; in Staffordshire and in many a German or Austrian town they have shaped and cut frail porcelain and thin glass. And these do not exhaust the great army which has toiled and

moiled in order that half-a-dozen people may eat and drink supremely well.

In the midst of all this artificiality the **salad**, usually served with the roast, has the charm of a **return to nature**. It is like a picnic on the fourth or fifth day of a house-party which has been feasting too royally, or it is like Marie Antoinette's Petit Trianon amidst the pomps of Versailles. Or, rather, this is what a salad ought to be. Unfortunately, English house-keepers often repeat with their salads the grand mistake which they make with their soups. That is to say, they try to work up a salad into a dish rich and elaborate enough for a complete meal, forgetting that it is almost always better as an accompaniment to something else. I have seen English salads which could not be explained on any other theory.

While a salad, in the **middle** of a long dinner, is a **cool oasis** of escape from the richness of cooked foods, this is not its only attraction. A salad will help down many a dry slice of cold meat which would otherwise offend the palate. And, while pleasing both palate and eye, it may be also a valuable food. We know that nearly two thousand years ago one of the most famous of physicians used to eat the plant which we call a **cabbage-lettuce** nearly every evening to induce sleep. I often carry out his prescription, and find a cabbage-lettuce to be a much more effective and less objectionable nightcap than a whisky-and-soda. As for **watercress**, its value is enormous.

Salad plants of one kind or another are obtainable in England all the year round at low prices and nobody has any excuse for neglecting them. If some of our commercial men would eat a little less meat and potatoes, and much more salad, they would come and go with clearer skins and brighter eyes and quicker steps.

A few weeks before the War broke out, I wrote some notes on salad-making and they were published in a little periodical called *Downman's Bulletin*, which is circulated privately. These notes were reproduced by many newspapers in an abridged form and I have been asked to print them over again in the present volume. Here they are :

WINE AND OIL

In ancient writings, both sacred and profane, oil and wine are linked over and over again. And in Italy, even in this twentieth century, the wine merchant is still an oil merchant as well. In England, culinary and edible oils have fallen among grocers ; and grocers in these days are more often concerned with " cheap lines " than with hoary traditions of fine eating. Their **salad oils** are generally blends of inferior oil with the oil from cotton seed and various nuts.

Now the housewife who saves sixpence on a large bottle of salad oil is as foolish as her sister who saves sixpence on a pound of tea. If a bottle of oil or a pound of tea were wholly consumed at a single meal, one could understand the housewife's wish to economise ; be-

cause sixpence a day is nearly ten pounds a year. But a bottle of oil serves for many salads, just as a pound of tea suffices for dozens of pots and scores of cups : and it follows that, for the sake of a farthing, a meal is being spoilt. To be exact, the farthing is not truly saved ; because one must use more of poor oil or poor tea than of the better quality.

The best oil—better than the famous oil of Lucca or of San Remo—is the oil of Provence ; and the best oil of Provence is that which finds its way to the markets of Bordeaux. Bordeaux is a city of epicures ; because Bordeaux flourishes by reason of the finely educated palates of the merchants who are always tasting, tasting, tasting the almost innumerable growths and vintages of the Médoc and of the other wine-growing regions of the Gironde. This oil is pure and unmixed olive oil of the old kind, and there is nothing to beat it as food or as medicine. The doctors, who are prescribing olive oil more and more, should see to it that their patients do not swallow a coarse blend of oils made from nuts and seeds.

A good salad means good oil. It means also good vinegar, or a fresh and juicy lime or lemon. **Wine vinegar** is better than malt vinegar ; but it must be remembered that wine vinegar is strong and that the quantity used must be smaller than when malt vinegar is chosen.

I am often asked to give my prescription for a salad. This, however, is an art and a science which cannot be reduced to writing. Salad vegetables vary enormously in succulency and briskness ; and the

born salad-maker is always changing his procedure. But, although nothing can take the place of an incommunicable skill and judgment, some rough-and-ready hints may be set down.

In every house there ought to be a *panier à salade*.¹ In France every peasant's wife knows how to wield one. A *panier à salade* is a wire basket, with a rather narrow mouth like that of an old Chinese ginger jar. After washing your cress and lettuce and other greenery, you drop the leaves into this wire basket and whirl it smartly round by the wire handle, thus causing every drop of water to fly out. It is because of the wetness of their materials that most makers of salads in England fail; for **oil and water will never agree**.

Nowadays almost everybody knows that the leaves of a salad must be torn and not cut. I should hesitate to print so trite a precept if I had not had recent evidence that it is still disregarded here and there. In punishment for my sins (which are many and black, but neither many nor black enough for such reprisals) I was invited to the house of a lady with a local reputation for her salads. In a large and costly bowl I found a number of lettuces which had been cut up finely with a knife some hours before. To these there had been added hard-boiled eggs and tomatoes in quarters, and a drench of a strange cream. The mixture had a certain tastiness which was seductive, but the night watches brought insight and penitence.

Not until he has tasted his salad plants can a salad-maker compound his dressing. Some plants require

¹ In speaking to Frenchmen, one should be careful to remember that a *panier à salade* means also a prison van, or "Black Maria."

more salt than others, and this is not the only opening for tact. It may be said, however, that there is much truth in the old counsel: "Let a miser put in the vinegar, a spendthrift the oil, and a wise man the salt." The wisdom of the wise man will be shown, for example, in giving much more salt to a tomato than to a lettuce. As for the oil and the vinegar, Englishwomen nearly always make the mistake of pouring out far too much vinegar and far **too little oil**. They are afraid that the oil will taste gross, but the truth is that the oil may greatly exceed the vinegar and still not assert itself. In some salads, pepper and even made mustard and a drop or so of Worcester sauce should be added. Experiment alone will teach how and when and why these things should be done.

To the old proverb just quoted, it is often added that a madman should stir up the whole. Madmen, however, are better out of the way. When the salad plants are in the bowl, the dressing should be mixed in a large wooden spoon or in a cup, and after it has been beaten smooth it should be quickly poured over the leaves and then there should be a bold and strong and rapid turning of the greenery over and over until every leaf has taken its share of the dressing. This operation must be postponed until a moment or two before the salad is wanted. Otherwise the plants will come sodden to the table.

At this point my voice sinks to a whisper, and it is to be understood that I am speaking privately and confidentially and with bated breath to the gourmet only. *The Almighty has given us better tools for salad-mixing than any wooden fork and spoon.* In conditions of homely intimacy, a salad-maker, when all is ready,

will wash his hands well and long as the moment approaches for serving the bowl. He will shun common or perfumed soaps and will use nothing but a soap made from olive oil. Having dried his hands perfectly on a warm, clean towel, he will finally whisk the cup of dressing into homogeneity, will pour its contents over the salad, and will immediately proceed to wring the leaves in the liquid as a washerwoman wrings clothes in soapy water. (How horrid!) In doing this, he will spoil the appearance of some of the leaves, but he will have a salad fit for the gods.

When tomato is wanted, thin slices should be lightly sprinkled with dressing and added to a salad after the mixing with fork and spoon or with the hands. If they are added before, they will break and make the salad look messy. The young leaves of nasturtiums and the unopened flowers greatly improve an ordinary salad of lettuce and watercress. A few fully opened flowers of nasturtium may be added at the last moment for their appearance, and some of the seeds may be thrown in as well. [End of "Wine and Oil."]

To the foregoing paragraphs I should add one or two remarks. A spoonful of **cream** added to a salad of cabbage-lettuce is an improvement when the salad is served with lean beef or any other food which requires a little fat. [The cream would be a mistake in a salad served with roast duck.]

Many earnest students of table matters would not agree with my advice for dressing salads. Their

method is to accumulate their washed and dried ingredients in a bowl and then to dust in the pepper and salt. Afterwards they take an oil-bottle in the left hand and a wooden fork in the right. They pour in the oil drop by drop, turning the salad plants so that all may be oiled. Finally, they add a spoonful of vinegar and proceed to " **fatigue** " the salad by turning it over and over.

When a little pool of fine salad-dressing remains at the bottom of the bowl, it need not be wasted. Every scrap of greenery should be lifted out of it and the dressing can then be added to a soup. On hot days I use it after a fashion which I learned from a muleteer in Spain. I chop up a good piece of **cucumber** and mix it in the dressing with the crumb of a slice of household bread. This makes a wonderfully refreshing compound, like **meat and drink** in one. But it does not suit all tastes, and most of us are so placed that we should not find an opportunity of eating it.

A **Cold Slaw** is popular in Kentucky. Having blanched a firm white cabbage, the Kentucky cook cuts it up into long narrow strips, longer than matches but no thicker. Sometimes he mixes in some strips of blanched celery, equally thin. He adds (though this is not indispensable) a tablespoonful of the melted fat which is yielded by the grilling or frying of the breakfast bacon. Finally he smothers the strips in thinned mayonnaise and serves the "Slaw" cold.

When salad plants are bought, the minimum quantities which can be purchased to advantage will often make too large a heap to be eaten on one day. Instead of wasting what is not required, the surplus should be used for soup or in some entrée. A recipe has already been given for **watercress soup**. **Braised lettuce** is excellent.

CHAPTER XII

SWEETS AND OMELETTES

AN earnest person who has seen the plan of this book is grieved to know that sweets are not to be discouraged in it. [The earnest person happens to be a man who hates sweets with his whole soul, but one must charitably acquit him of selfishness and insincerity.] To some extent he is right. It is beyond doubt that most grown-up Britons would be better in health and temper if puddings and pies and tarts and cakes and meringues were more rarely seen on their plates. For children it is a prudent as well as a kindly course to provide sweetstuff ; but older people are the worse, in nine cases out of ten, for consuming them largely and frequently.

Sweets, in spite of this warning, cannot be omitted from a cookery-book. As, however, they belong to that branch of cookery in which the English are strong, I do not doubt that most of my readers could teach me more than I can teach them under this head. I shall therefore recognise my limitations and describe only a few sweets which experience has vindicated at little homely dinners for both men and women, and I shall prefer to speak of those which can be served either as **sweets** or **savouries** according to the flavouring and seasoning.

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Pancakes are nearly always popular. I have sometimes treated them as savouries rather than as sweets by introducing piquant little choppings of meat or fish or vegetables instead of preserves or powdered sugar. Such garnishes should be very sparing in quantity and should be separately heated so that there shall not be an instant's delay. They must not be too moist. A pancake costs less than an omelette, but can be nicer as a vehicle for savoury morsels.

Although **omelettes**, owing to the well-known difficulty of making them without breaking eggs, will be out of the programme of the thrifty as a rule, occasions may arise when they are justified. A present of eggs may arrive from a country friend, or eggs may be cheap for a little while in the shops, or an invalid may have to be coaxed regardless of expense. I cannot do better than transcribe the directions for omelette-making from the little book by Mr Peter Gallina, already referred to. Mr Gallina owes part of his success to his practice of inviting his customers to make their way down into his kitchens any morning, just before the busiest moments of lunch, to see omelettes made by professional cooks. His advice is as follows :—

“ English people nearly always fail to make a good omelette. Yet this is a dish which anybody can prepare, once the right way is known.

“ Have a pan of hammered steel. After making an omelette, **never wash the pan with water**, but wipe it immediately with a clean cloth.

“ Plain omelette. Put a small piece of butter in the pan, on a hot stove or fire. While the butter is coming to a froth, whisk two eggs (whites and yolks together) in a basin with a little salt and pepper. When they are well mixed, pour them into the pan. As soon as the bottom of the omelette begins to set, shake the pan vigorously. Then let the contents settle flat again (which will require only a few moments) and the omelette will be ready. A hot plate must be at hand to receive it. With practice you can learn to give the pan a last shake in such a way that the omelette will fold itself neatly over without your touching it.

“ Omelette au Fromage. This is made like a plain omelette, with two differences. First, you must mix some grated Parmesan cheese with the eggs before cooking them ; and secondly, you must sprinkle some more Parmesan on the finished omelette.

“ Omelette aux Fines Herbes. Mix your fines herbes (or chopped parsley) with the eggs, then proceed exactly as if you were making a plain omelette.

“ Omelette Lyonnaise. Chop an onion finely and cook it in the butter till soft. Pour the beaten eggs on top, and complete as usual.

“ Omelette Portugaise. Cook apart some tomato in butter. Spread it, hot, on top of a plain omelette.

“ Omelette aux Rognons. Cut a nice veal (or one sheep's) kidney into small dice. Cook the dice, in butter, in a separate pan. Add a teaspoonful of Madeira. Then prepare a plain omelette, open it, and put the kidney inside.”

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We have wandered away from sweets into savouries, as I said we should. So let us return to sweets by way of **Omelettes aux Confitures, au Rhum and au Kirsch**. For the first, warm the jam, and proceed as for a kidney or for a tomato omelette. For "**flaming**" **omelettes**, mix a small teaspoonful of castor sugar with the beaten eggs in the first instance and proceed as for a plain omelette. When it is made, fold the omelette, pour over it a tablespoonful of rum, dust some more castor sugar over the top, and apply the match. The plate must be very hot. Should your rum be too much "below proof" warm it a little beforehand and it will take fire more readily.

Fritters are easy to make, provided that there is no weakening from the standard for frying in a deep bath of fat—that is to say, a bath nearly three inches deep. This fat must be very hot at the moment of dropping in the fritter. To make sure that the fat is boiling, it is a good plan to test it with a tiny portion of batter. If the fat be hot enough, the batter will rise instantly to the surface, with a brisk frizzling. As to the composition of the fritters, you can apply to them the principle which has just been stated for pancakes and omelettes—that is to say, they can be either sweet or savoury. Fritters of **banana** and **apple** and **apricot** and **orange** are known to everybody, but these do not exhaust the possibilities. I have made fritters with almost every kind of edible. Pieces of **chicken**, of **smoked haddock**, of **cold fish**, of **cauliflower** and even of young and delicate **turnips** are

worth eating in fritter form. Indeed one can take a collection of choice odds and ends and decide which shall be *hors d'œuvre* and which shall be savouries according to the general complexion of the dinner. Some menus would be well introduced, for example, by a *hors d'œuvre* of sprigs of cauliflower and oil and vinegar. Other menus would be more satisfactory with no *hors d'œuvre* at all, but with the same **cauliflower** worked up into fritters. It goes without saying that the fritters must not be greasy. To prevent this, a cook must beware of putting too many fritters into the fat at the same time. I have already pointed out the importance of **absolutely boiling fat**, and it is obvious that, if too many raw cold fritters are suddenly introduced, the temperature of the fat will fall to such a point that the batter and frying-fat **will** commingle and the result will be a heavy and greasy little cannon-ball instead of a **golden-brown bubble**. I have sometimes made very small fritters containing sections of a juicy **lemon**, altogether unsweetened. A pinch of salt is sprinkled on them at the moment of serving and they are used as a garnish to fish or entrées. I ought to add, however, that everybody cannot be depended on to like them.

A really wholesome sweet, suitable for young and old, is the **boiled or steamed pudding** made in a basin with flour, breadcrumbs and chopped suet and an egg, with a little milk and some flavourings. **Lemon** pudding, **marmalade** pudding and **ginger** pudding are excellent, and the recipes for making them are so well known to everybody that I need add no more

than point out the superiority of flour and breadcrumb to unmixed flour.

The other kind of steamed pudding, made by lining **a basin** with a thin sheet of dough and covering it, after it has been filled with sections of apple or other fruit, by means of a dough lid (or with the margins of the dough-sheet folded over), is another valuable addition to a cheap and wholesome dietary. This method can be used for meats as well as fruits, although it would then become a homely entrée rather than a savoury, as it is a dish substantial enough for the whole meal of a hungry man.

I do not recommend the frequent use of **jellies**, **custards** and **blanc-manges**, made from the contents of **low-priced packets**. Towards the end of the nineteenth century such things began to be bought much too freely, with the result that many of the housewives of to-day do not know how to make jelly from **a calf's foot** or to prepare an old-fashioned custard. There is no royal road in either of these matters; and the truthful spirit of the little George Washington does not inspire the advertisements which assert that custards and jellies made from the cheap materials in packets are as good as those with which the fatted calf and the clucking hen can provide us. When I see a jelly or a custard in an ordinary house or at a seaside hotel my heart sinks. And yet jellies and custards ought to rank high among our sweets. Jellies flavoured with wine, and custards with or without stewed fruits, are too honourable to be parodied from the wholesale grocer's laboratory.

When the art of making **light pastry** has been acquired, the door is opened to a multitude of good things. Pastry need not be expensive. The **substitutes for butter** which are made nowadays from cocoanuts and other nuts should be tried for pastry. A few experiments will be necessary, and a failure or two must not cause discouragement. These are no days for the most expensive pastes, such as the **puff paste**, which requires a pound of butter to a pound of flour. On the other hand, it is a mistake to starve the pastry too much. I am persuaded that a certain style of English pie crust has done almost as much harm as drink. Indeed it is a cause of drink. It provokes indigestion and bad temper, and brings so much discord into the home as to drive out of it those who have the means to go elsewhere. I have seen on a working man's table a meat pie which was to be followed by an apple pie. His wife's excuse was that, having the pastry and having the oven hot, it was only natural to make the two kinds of pies at the same time. Both were served hot. Good materials had been used, but with so little skill that the pastry made one wish for plenty of elbow-room and a coal-hammer. The husband was a builder's foreman, with a little clerical work to do in the afternoons which was a trial to him. It is not to be wondered at that he left his wooden hut three times that afternoon for a soothing dram at the "Three Jolly Bricklayers."

With good pastry, every stage of a dinner can be improved, from the *hors d'œuvre* to the sweets. [I do not mean pastry at more than one stage each day.]

When there is a tiny remainder of paste, one can make tiny **tartlets**, filled with potted meat or any other tasty filling, to serve cold among the *hors d'œuvre* or hot as a savoury. Little **crescents** of light pastry may be thrown at the last moment into suitable soups. Fish can be cooked in pastry. As for entrées, there are dozens of ways of presenting meats in light pastry-shells, which should be less stodgy than the meat turnovers sometimes given to schoolboys when they go out for a day's ramble. Pies, filled with meat or birds, or ground-game, or a mixture of these with vegetables; with fresh fruit, or with fruit preserved according to the directions in the introductory chapter—all these are known to everybody and are worth learning to make really well.

Open tarts can be made in the English fashion and filled with inexpensive preserves. The jam should not be dried up by too much heat and should be spread over the paste only a few minutes before the baking is concluded.

An **apple tart in the French style** is a pleasant change. To make it you must have what is called a **tart ring**, about one inch deep. Having buttered the inside of the ring, you roll out a sheet of pastry about a quarter of an inch thick. You should prepare the pastry as for "short crust," using less than half-a-pound of butter, or butter substitute, to the pound of flour. Lay the sheet of pastry over the ring and press it neatly home all round so that it makes a shallow

circular receptacle with perpendicular sides. Trim the top edges, not quite close. Of course you will not be doing all these things without having placed the ring on a baking-tin. A round case of this kind is called a **flan**. A flan admits of many uses. For some things it is best to bake it empty, so that the filling will not be dried in the oven. [In suggesting that you should bake it empty, I ought to warn you that the flan might lose its shape if you did not pack it loosely with some dry objects, such as haricot beans, which can be taken out after the flan has set.] For the French apple tart you will **not** bake the flan before filling it. You will take some pulp of apples which the French call **apple-marmalade**. This is made by cooking some apples with butter and sugar in a small pan until they subside into a pulp. You must not use the pulp until it is cold. Prick all over the bottom of the flan, sprinkle in it a good handful of biscuit crumbs, and then add the pulp until it is filled to within about a third of an inch of the brim. Next, pick out a fine and sound apple, peel it, core it, and cut it into about sixteen crescent-shaped pieces, like the thinnest sections of an orange. Arrange these sections so as to overlap one another in a long waving curve over the whole surface of the pulp. The flan and its contents must now be baked at a good heat until the pastry is seen to be properly baked. On taking it from the oven, carefully remove the ring and the apple tart is ready. Many French cooks add a little pulp of apricots a few minutes before the baking is finished, the pulp being smeared over the apples. I do not recommend this course. If the apples lack flavour, I should add grated lemon rind

to the apples and butter and sugar when making the pulp. [An ingenious cook can play many variations on this recipe. I have used a **pulp of plums**, cutting neat sections from large Victoria plums for the top layer, and, although I have not yet made the experiments, no doubt use could be made of some of the very cheap fruits which have been **sun-dried** or evaporated.]

Junkets are interesting and easy to make. They have the advantage of setting more quickly than jelly when one cannot command the use of a very cold larder. A good junket should be smooth and firm. Less popular than junkets, but better, in my opinion, are the jellies and creams which can be made cheaply with the aid of **Irish moss**. This strange sea-moss comes from the most savage spots on the coasts of Connaught. I have used it in Connemara scores of times, and have only failed when I have used too much. Irish moss as received from the gatherers requires careful cleaning, because tiny shells and sea-creatures lodge in it. Even when it is obtained at a shop it should be well washed before it is used. Containing as it does **sulphur and iodine** in a kind of natural gum, it is supposed to be a health-giving plant, especially to those persons whose chests are not strong. Whenever I see some of the wretched sheets of **gelatine** which are used in invalid cookery, I wish that Irish moss might come into its own. The **blanc-mange** and **beef-tea jelly** prepared for the sick with the aid of gelatine would often be far better with **Irish moss**, which is **used like gelatine** or isinglass. The

various gelatines, whether natural or prepared, are overrated except as vehicles for better nourishment.

Stewed fruits are useful, but it is a pity to make them out of fruits which are good enough to eat in the natural state. I have eaten wretched stews of cherries with imitation custards when at less **expense** my hostess could have given her guests a pretty basket of cherries beautiful to behold and far better to eat. The art of cookery lifts mankind above the level of the savage ; but it does not follow that we are obliged to cook everything we can lay our hands on. Millions of fine plums and pears and apples and blackberries and raspberries find a **sugary grave** every year. As a general rule, let no fruit be stewed unless it is not quite good enough to eat.

As for **rice** and **sago** and **semolina** and **tapioca** puddings, I repeat the warning that these soft foods are dangerous because children are inclined to bolt them without the salivation which they demand. If they can be served with stewed rhubarb which has not been stewed to death or with stewed apples or pears which retain some firmness, they will be swallowed less hurriedly and may be less objectionable. Eaten properly, they are immensely valuable to nearly all children and to many grown-up persons.

The **apple** lends itself admirably to the making of sweets and savouries. When the core is taken out

and its place filled with a little butter and sugar, a baked apple is excellent. Instead of butter and sugar you can use a mixture of butter and apple chutney, thus turning out a **savoury apple**, which is not unlike the curried apples familiar to some Russian housewives. Jam also replaces the butter and sugar successfully, where children are concerned.

Stewed prunes are good when the prunes are not too skinny. They may be eaten with a rather stiff and creamy rice pudding, or the stones can be taken out and the stewed prune stuffed with cream or cream cheese.

Cheese-cakes must not be encouraged in War-time, as the lemon cheese or curd used for filling them requires good eggs and plenty of them.

Tinned fruits of good brands are not to be despised by thrifty persons. Tinned **pears** of the best packings cannot easily be beaten by the fresh fruit. They are good enough to be consumed just as they are. On **occasions of ceremony**, however, a piece of a pear can be laid at the bottom of a champagne glass and enlivened with a teaspoonful of good raspberry jam, a few drops of Kirsch, a drench of thick cream, some frothed white of egg and a crystallised cherry. Something similar can be done with tinned **peaches** and **apricots**. Preserved **pine-apples** are useful for fritters ; and I have also fallen back upon them for the

fruit salad or **macedoine** which I am about to describe.

Open a tin of cheap pine-apple **chunks** from a good shop and cut them into thin slices with a silver knife and fork. If oranges happen to be cheap and sweet and juicy, peel two of them and break them into the smallest sections, taking care to free them entirely from the white skin and pith. In taking the pips out of these bits of orange you will have to break the sections, but this is an advantage, as it enables the orange juice to run out and the other juices to run in. If your party is to be large, buy also one of the inexpensive little tins of **peeled Muscat grapes**. Lay the grapes open with a silver knife and lift out the stones. If you have a sound and very ripe and juicy pear, peel and core and slice it. Put all these ingredients in a glass dish and pour over them the juice from the pine-apple chunks and the peeled grapes, mixed with a glass of sherry or, better still, a dessert-spoonful of Kirsch or Curaçao or Maraschino. A few minutes before the salad is to be eaten, add two bananas sliced into thin discs. With a silver spoon drench the discs of banana with the juice, but **do not break them** by too much turning over. Serve the salad as it is, or with a little cream. This macedoine will cost between twopence and threepence a portion, but it is a distinguished as well as a refreshing conclusion to a dinner.

In the chapter called "Going to Market" I promised to explain a good way of serving a cheap ripe **pine-apple**. Take a long narrow cake-knife with a

“saw” back. Lay the pine-apple sideways on a large meat-plate and cut off the bottom at the point where the sides begin to narrow downwards. Then cut off the top, tuft and all, at the point where the sides begin to narrow upwards. You must perform both these amputations as cleanly and straightly as possible. Put the top and bottom on one side. You will now be looking at what I may call the trunk of the pine-apple, or the central cylinder. Thrust in the sharp point of the cake-knife between the flesh and the skin and work it gently up until it comes out at the other end. Now begin to saw backwards just inside the circumference of the fruit so that you separate the flesh from the skin. Take care that you do not break through the skin at any point. If you have done the work properly, you will be able to lift the whole of the peel in one piece clear of the flesh, like lifting up a tube four or five inches in diameter. The flesh will appear as a cylindrical mass exuding a great deal of juice which you must not lose. Turn this mass on its side and cut it briskly into thin slices without allowing them to fall apart. Then stand the mass upright and carefully encase it again in the tube of skin. Let it go on draining for some time and finally collect all the juice in a clear glass or silver jug. A few minutes before dinner, place the pine-apple in the middle of an *épergne* or any other raised-up stand and carefully **restore the tufted top** so as to fit exactly in its original position. Bank round the foot of the pine-apple with any dessert apples and pears and oranges which you may have in the house. If you have guests, they will look at the pine-apple throughout dinner with the usual conviction that it

is not intended to be cut and yet, although you may have paid for it no more than some conventional sweets would cost you, they will be filled with reverence for your royal hospitality. At the proper moment lift off the top and the tubular skin and you will be able to serve slices of pine-apple with no mess or fuss. The juice, which can be touched up with a little liqueur if you like, will be handed round in the glass jug or silver boat.

I remember explaining the buying and preparing and serving of a pine-apple, on these lines, to a lady who had a weakness for giving ceremonious little dinners out of a slender income. After listening to me suspiciously she replied, to our mutual discomfort, that my idea was beyond her means. A few weeks later I heard of one of her dinners and it turned out that her principal sweet had consisted of a very tastefully arranged assortment of *éclairs* and *babas* and *mille feuilles* and *petits fours* from a well-known confectioner's, which had certainly cost her more than my pine-apple cost me. To round off a dinner with ready-made wares from a pastrycook's is a hauling down of the flag which no housewife should come to without shame. Besides, a plateful of pastries recalls too vividly to the mind the rude remark of Thackeray, who, on being asked by his hostess which tart he would have, replied : " I think, ma'am, I should like a tuppenny one."

In French families, at vintage-time, it is usual to boil some **chestnuts** and to eat them with a glassful of the cloudy **new** juice. About the end of September the little wine shops and cafés exhibit placards

announcing "Sweet New White Wine." We do not make wine in England, although our forefathers did it pretty well ; but it is possible, none the less, to celebrate the wine harvest somewhat after the French fashion. When, in the course of your marketing, you notice that large white grapes are cheap, buy a pound or two of them. They will not cost you more than a few pence. [On the day of my writing this they are threepence a pound.] Throw out any shrivelled or rotten berries and wring the juice out of those which remain. There are many ways of doing this. One good plan is to break them with a wooden pestle and afterwards put the whole of the pulp in a piece of muslin, screwing it tighter until **every drop of juice** has come out. The juice, in spite of its cloudiness, should appear on the table in a glass jug or decanter. As for the chestnuts, try to get the Italian kind with only one inside skin. Wash the nuts, and, if you decide on boiling them, do so in any old saucepan. [It is a pity to use a new one, as the chestnuts would soil it.] Or you can cook the chestnuts on an old shovel over a good fire. Or you can roast them, as in the Cat and Monkey fable, which was evidently written by a man who knew more of monkeys than of cats. In some houses the peeling of the nuts is done at the table, each person doing his own work. Many Frenchmen crumble the chestnuts into the bottom of a glass, bedew them well with the grape juice and eat the mess with a spoon. This idea of **grape juice and chestnuts** is well worth carrying out ; for, while a chestnut is not so nutritious as a Brazil nut, it is still a valuable food when mixed with the juice of grapes.

It may not always be convenient to buy grapes and press them. At such times chestnuts can be made into a purée and flavoured with a little cream and vanilla. But I think they are nicest simply boiled or roasted. I shall always remember one bitterly cold evening in the Portuguese highlands. It was All Hallows' Eve. The whole dinner at my inn was excellent ; but it reached its climax when a Gallego brought me a tureen filled with magnificent chestnuts in their skins, piping hot. A bottle of old Bucellas wine was at my elbow and I had little difficulty in keeping alive.

Nuts at the end of a meal must be sparingly consumed. From the standpoint of the theorist, we ought to expect the worst results from the nut-eating of some greedy people at Christmas. Nuts and dried fruit and a glass of port are a meal in themselves, so that the man who indulges in them after eating turkey and sausages and plum pudding is really beginning his meal over again. Fortunately, Brazil nuts are not at their best at Christmas, or the worst might happen.

CHAPTER XIII

ITALIAN PASTES

EIGHTEEN years ago it was my misfortune to be linked with a friend who held stoutly to the doctrine of "cutlet for cutlet." We were transacting some literary business together. I believe that when we dined at my house—say a dozen times—I "did him well." And I do not doubt that his reminiscences of the hospitality which he extended to me—say a dozen times—in a cheap Italian restaurant are, to him, equally satisfactory. He used to take me to a trattoria called "The Flora," which has disappeared. Dinners at "The Flora" were cheap and ample and bad. Nevertheless, as I sat on a velvet seat and looked at the worst mural paintings that even a modern Italian could conceive, and drank pasteurised wines, I learnt a great deal about cookery and dinners. The *hors d'œuvre* always made a good show, though they were too oily to eat. The soup, though poor, was hot. The fish, though common, was fresh and clean. The *entrée*, of frozen mutton with the cheapest tinned peas or French beans, would have made a convict weep; and the leg of chicken, with barely half-an-ounce of meat between the skin and the bone, and the salad dressed with cotton-seed oil, were even worse than the *entrée*. Yet I was able to endure these dinners because of an interlude described on the menu as **farinage**. Sometimes the *farinage* was simply

macaroni with grated cheese. At other times the white pipes were served in the manner of Naples or of Milan. On other evenings we had **spaghetti**, or **nouilles**, with grated cheese. And when the dinner was finished off with sleepy apples and unripe bananas and thick-skinned grapes and sugary raisins, I always managed to walk home with the goodly memory of the farinage triumphing over my horrid souvenirs of the coarser food.

Farinage ought not to be served seven times a week at English tables. On the other hand, it ought not to be ignored. In the cathedral city where I was brought up there was an admirable grocer named Dutton. He was an out-and-out Englishman : but he preferred to call himself an Italian warehouseman, and among the exotic wonders of his window was a box of macaroni. The neighbouring duke, and the travelled ladies who were married to the bishop and the dean and the canons, bought macaroni now and then ; but they seemed to have an imperfect knowledge of its possibilities. They used to make macaroni puddings and nasty messes of macaroni and butter and cheese. Also they were accustomed to serve a soup made of **vermicelli** and meat-stained hot water, which was supposed to demonstrate the inferiority of Continental to English cookery. But the citizens' wives in general left such things alone.

Macaroni and the kindred Italian pastes are entitled to respect. It is important to buy good qualities only. At the Continental Stores in Dean Street, Soho, there is a man who seems to know a good deal about

macaroni. He sells pastes in all kinds of shapes. For example, he has—I will translate the Italian—**angels' tresses, bulls' eyes, shells, stars,** and many other shapes of macaroni. These are cheap. At a higher price he has tubes of macaroni nearly **an inch in diameter**, into which one can push a small sausage or a stuffing so as to make the delicacy beloved of all Italians on Easter Sunday. He keeps grated **Parmesan cheese** and **tomato purée** as well. If you ask this excellent person for some recipes he will give them to you. I must, however, recognise the fact that all my readers do not live in London and I will therefore give them a few hints about macaroni. Buy it at a good shop. Boil it quickly in plenty of fast-boiling salted water, with the lid off the pan. [Wipe it with a dry cloth before you throw it into the boiling water, but do not soak it or wash it.] While it is boiling, stir it with a wooden spoon so that it shall not stick to the pan. Test it by squeezing a piece between the finger and thumb or by eating a scrap. As the various makes of macaroni differ one from another, the exact time for boiling cannot be stated, but the rule is that macaroni must not be cooked to the point of sloppiness. As soon as it is cooked it must be well shaken and drained through a colander or a sieve. When it is dry it can be served with butter and grated cheese, or it may be worked with a purée of tomatoes, or it may be served *au gratin*, or it may be used as a plain garnish with meat, or it will do as one of the ingredients in a vegetable soup.

Nearly related to macaroni is the delicacy known

as **gniocchi**. To make gniocchi you will need half-a-teacupful of **semolina**. Mix the semolina to a paste with cold milk. Then put about a pint of milk on the fire in a pan and, as soon as it boils, gradually work in the semolina. Let it boil, stirring it all the time, until the milk and the semolina have come thoroughly together. Take it off the fire and place the pan in a cold place. When the mixture is cool, spread it on a pasteboard to a thickness of rather less than half-an-inch, and cut it **into squares**. Lay these squares at the bottom of a fireproof dish and sprinkle flakes of butter and Parmesan cheese over them. Add another layer of the paste with more butter and cheese, and build on layer after layer till you have nothing left. Pour some gravy or really good stock into the dish and put it into a rather quick oven. **Gnionchi with braised or stewed beef** will go down extremely well.

Although it is the rule to cook macaroni in plenty of fast-boiling water, I often throw a large handful of it (not previously boiled) into my homely soups and let it cook for an hour or two. It seems to become beautifully tender and to show its best flavour when treated in this way.

Macaroni and spaghetti make useful and cheap extensions for most grilled and braised meats ; and, after packing potted meat or some other stuffing into boiled shells or tubes of macaroni, you can produce a charming dish by finishing off the shells or tubes in good stock, in a moderate oven.

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Some of the most worthless grocers sell a macaroni of a dull grey colour, or of an unholy yellow of chemical origin. As I have been asked for the best way of treating these kinds of macaroni, I have pleasure in giving two alternative methods. You must either return them to the grocer and ask for your money back ; or throw them into the dustbin and make up your mind to go to good shops only in future.

CHAPTER XIV

SAVOURIES

NINETEEN hundred years ago the whole course of a Roman dinner was expressed by the phrase: "Fiam the eggs to the apples." My memory is bad, but I believe that some modern playwright or novelist has given us a new version in the words: "'Twixt the Soup and the Savoury." The Roman gourmets probably began their banquets with some kind of hors d'œuvre, made from eggs, and wound up with fruit. The eggs were often the eggs of peahens, or they were commoner eggs formed into sausages on a foundation of minced and spiced meats.

In these days many men have formed the habit of neglecting the fruit and of finishing dinner with a **savoury**. As most savouries are like hot hors d'œuvre, the dinner of a twentieth-century gourmet may be compared with a musical composition, which satisfies the ear by beginning and ending in the same key. But, in a book devoted to the simplifying of our habits, I shall not expand upon merely toothsome savouries. I remember hearing a man say that, towards the end of a dinner, he usually felt that there was an odd corner of his interior still empty and that a savoury **filled it very snugly**. I have no sympathy with such a feeling. The idea that one must not rise

ERRATUM

Page 235, last word of line 2,
for "Fiam" read "From"

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from the table until one cannot eat a scrap more is hateful in itself and deadly in practice. I shall therefore mention only those reasonable and useful savouries which a housekeeper would be entitled to regard as part of the solid food with which to satisfy the reasonable hunger of those who sit at her table.

This chapter can be short, because hints have already been given in the discursive chapter on **sweets** for the adapting of many entremets as savouries. And in the chapter on *Hors d'Œuvre* suggestions were made which apply to savouries.

Of all savouries which are entitled to be regarded as substantial parts of a nourishing meal, a **Welsh rare-bit** comes first. To make a good Welsh rarebit, I prefer a Cheshire cheese with a good crumb. The extremely smooth cheeses which many provision merchants sell as Cheddar are much less suitable. Let the cheese be **finely grated**. Then let it be put into a saucepan with one tablespoonful of beer to two ounces of cheese. A little pepper and some made mustard should be stirred into the cheese and beer over the fire or stove. The stirring must never cease until the cheese becomes quite smooth and begins to thicken in the pan. A yolk of an egg, worked in at the last moment, is a great improvement. The cheese ought to be spread on strips of buttered toast, toasted at the last minute.

The **beer** does not taste like itself after being cooked in this way. I may say, however, for those who

object to beer on conscientious grounds, that milk can be used instead, although the Welsh rarebit will not be so satisfactory.

For a change, but rarely, I have used the **white of egg** (which was left on my hands after mixing in the yolk) by poaching it and spreading it on the buttered toast, just below the cheese. I call this a **Chester Rarebit**, not because it is known in Chester but in memory of many a grand cheese which I have helped to eat on the banks of the Dee. Of course a poached egg **on top** of the cheese is a well-known addition to a Welsh Rarebit which thereby becomes a **Buck Rarebit**.

A **Soufflé au Parmesan** is served with pride at many a highly ceremonious dinner. Yet it is neither costly nor very difficult to make. When eggs are at their cheapest, I have provided a Soufflé au Parmesan at a cost of about twopence the portion. As it took the place of sweets and cheese, it could not be called a wild extravagance.

A buttered **soufflé dish** must first be prepared. Many cooks use **small** soufflé dishes according to the number of guests, but this is a wasteful plan; as some persons barely taste the soufflé while others want a second helping. If you do not possess a regular soufflé dish, use the thinnest of your fireproof basins or even a cake-tin.

Grate up an ounce and a half of Cheddar or Cheshire cheese with the same quantity of Parmesan. Many amateurs use Parmesan only, with displeasing results. Take a small saucepan and melt in it an ounce of butter with half-an-ounce of flour. Stir them well

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together and pour in a gill of milk, stirring vigorously until the mixture, so to speak, comes together and almost shrinks from the sides of the pan. Lift the pan off the fire, and put in the grated cheese, with salt and pepper. Next, beat in thoroughly the yolk of an egg. As soon as this first yolk is thoroughly incorporated with the mixture, repeat the process with a second yolk. Somebody should be at hand, if possible, whisking the whites of the two eggs you have used and also the white of a third egg as stiffly as possible. Add the froth of egg-whites to the mixture and give it a **light and rapid** stirring, but do not waste time or allow the frothing to subside. Pour the mixture into the soufflé dish, which should not be more than half filled, and put the dish in a rather hot oven. The soufflé will rise up splendidly above the rim of the dish, and, while remaining ethereally delicate within, will show a handsome brown crusting on the outside. It must be served **instantly** on very hot plates.

A great group of savouries is comprised under the name of **canapés**. Many of these require special purchases of material and I shall therefore pass them over, with the exception of one which I have often made cheaply but to the great satisfaction of those who have eaten it on cold nights. I buy a large tin of **cheap Portuguese sardines**. With an ordinary fish knife and fork I open the fish lengthwise and lift out the bones, all in one operation. Of course I cut off the tail. Should the skin be coarse, it is easy to remove this also. With a wooden pestle I pound the flesh of the sardines in a bowl and then season the mass

with salt, grey pepper, a pinch of cayenne, a little Worcestershire sauce and perhaps some drops of any other suitable sauce which I may have at hand. Finally I pour the oil from the tin into the bowl, with some lemon juice, and work everything together by means of two fish forks. I make some rather large and thick squares of toast, using a loaf of light and open crumb and taking care **not to overdo** the toasting. After spreading each square liberally with the paste, to a thickness of about a third of an inch or even more, I swiftly finish off the savoury under a salamandre or deflector. Sometimes I chop finely a little mango chutney and work it into the mixture. Indeed this savoury is flexible in design, and all kinds of things can be used up in it, including tiny choppings of cooked vegetables and flakes of cold fish.

Since the War began, a lady to whom I gave the foregoing recipe has applied it intelligently and successfully to **herrings**. At a decent grocery she bought for **fivepence halfpenny** a tin of herrings in **tomato sauce**. The brand was a reputable one and yet the tin was quite large. After the bones had been removed, the herrings were pounded in their own sauce and a small quantity of newly melted butter was added, with proper seasonings. I did not taste the savoury myself, but those who ate it were persons of ordinary fastidiousness and they are said to have been delighted. The squares were large and the quantity of fish on each was lavish, but the cost worked out at not much more than a penny a head.

Herring roes on toast are cheap and good savouries,

but they are not liked by everybody, and are only safe when you know the tastes of those for whom you are providing.

Potted meat and **potted fish on toast** go well. A cook with a good palate and with a knowledge, instinctive or acquired, for combinations, may vary the potted meat and the potted fish in **scores of ways**, sometimes moistening them with remains of sauces, sometimes pounding in vegetables with them, sometimes chopping up and adding pickles, sometimes finishing off the whole savoury *au gratin* with a top dressing of breadcrumb and butter and grated cheese.

I repeat in this place the suggestion that little tart-cases of short crust can be filled with many things besides the familiar jam and lemon-cheese. Pastes of fish or meat or vegetables suit the short crust admirably, as everybody knows who has eaten a good home-made sausage-roll. I had occasion not long ago to buy a bottle of **fonds d'artichauts** and could use only a few of them with my **tournedos**. I disposed of the rest in little tart crusts which almost exactly fitted the fonds d'artichauts. Each *fond* rested on a little bed of potted meat and cooked cauliflower. The meat and cauliflower were well pounded together, but the *fond*, of course, was left entire. Hardly anybody will need telling that I did not serve these tartlets at the meal in which the tournedos and artichokes figured prominently. [The *fonds* were not flabby.]

Some men are selfish enough to expect savouries which force the cook to begin very delicate operations when she has already served a troublesome dinner. They ought not to be encouraged. Nor should regular indulgence be shown towards those who are bent upon ruining their palates with **snack savouries** all on fire with **curry** or **cayenne and anchovy**. True hospitality is shown more in giving people what they ought to have than in pampering them with what they think they want.

CHAPTER XV

THE TABLE

No dish is completely successful until it has been found so by the man who eats it. Many a cook achieves a triumph of cookery in the kitchen, only to be speedily and bitterly disappointed by the news that nobody **at the table** thought much of her performance. In great houses this disaster is often due to the stupidity or laziness or spite of the butler or of the maids who wait at table ; but in small establishments it should never occur. A housekeeper, when designing a meal, should **count the cost**, not only in money but in labour. I have seen very clever little menus planned out, which have broken down through some shortage of utensils or through insufficient hands to serve the food smartly. The model housewife will take care that she has not only the fish and vegetables and meat demanded by her menu, but the glass and china and silver as well ; and she will be equally prudent concerning the strain on herself and on her servants.

Throughout this book I have kept in mind the case of the housekeeper who may be sometimes **single-handed**, except for unskilled help in the rougher work of the kitchen. I will continue to deal with such cases. First, I recommend that no luncheon or dinner should

include more than one dish of the kind which requires a good deal of attention **at the last minute**. It would be great folly, for instance, to arrange for a soup which requires sippets of toast, and a fish which demands a sauce reduced from its own liquor, and a roast bird with the full accompaniment of sauce and breadcrumb and gravy, and a salad, and a sweet covered with a newly frothed white of egg, all in the same meal. With ordinary foresight, even a rather long dinner can be so chosen as to run quite smoothly. An electrical **hot-plate** does not cost much and it enables wonders to be performed ; indeed, with a hot-plate the hostess who is a single-handed cook will not need to leave the room from the *hors d'œuvre* to the almonds and raisins. But prudence will make up for the hot-plate till you can buy it.

You will never regret a few modest purchases of special **pottery** and china, such as little white dishes for poached or scrambled eggs, crescent-shaped salad plates, and tiny casseroles, with lids, in which each person can have his own portion of *petits pois à la Française* or any similar dainty. At a total expense of not more than half-a-sovereign I have gradually brought together two or three dozen quaint little jugs for custards and oddly shaped plates and bowls and jars which make all the difference at table. Most of these I have bought from costers' barrows, and some of them were picked up at a copper or two apiece in Portugal and in Spain and at village fairs in France and Italy. When these things are not in use, they make a handsome show on shelves in the dining-

room where they reflect the firelight and the candle-light bravely.

The finest **table-linen** is not necessary every day in the year. A good plan is to have a rather long dining-room table, not quite three feet wide, and to cover it with a long strip of coarse washable material in golden-brown or blue, with hemmed napkins made from the same stuff. I am out of my depth in speaking of textile fabrics, but I think I mean a sort of soft "crash." Instead of having half-a-dozen sets of cloths and napkins all alike, the colours can be varied to suit the flowers and foliage and special crockery which will be displayed upon them. **Candlesticks**, with a safe mechanism against the guttering of the candles and the burning of the shades, are also well worth the small sum they cost. Last winter I fitted the right mechanism into some empty Benedictine **bottles** and used them repeatedly at table. The bottles were twined with vine leaves, or ivy, or sprays of autumn leaves, and had a fine sturdy look in contrast with the white candles. Under soft lights many a very cheap fish or entrée on its piece of homely pottery looks more tempting than food costing ten times as much served in a broad glare on expensive china.

The writing of a simple **menu** means very little trouble, and, when the meal is over, the menu may be kept for reference and will often be found useful. When a hostess does not like the idea of a menu

because it seems too formal, she ought to tell her guests or her family in a simple and matter-of-course way what dishes are about to be served. Now that dinners are becoming less stereotyped, these written or spoken announcements are more necessary than ever. It is unpleasant for everybody when sweets suddenly greet the hungry gaze of a man who has eaten the entrée sparingly because he expected a roast to follow ; and it is no less unpleasant to find that you have eaten heartily of what you thought was the principal dish when all the time something still more important has been provided. The best hostess of my acquaintance always begins dinner by some such speech as this : " There is nothing for you but a vegetable soup made from sixteen different vegetables out of my own garden ; a sole in white wine ; two chickens in the Kentucky way, with a hot corn pudding ; a bit of old Cheshire cheese ; and the fruit which you see in the middle of the table. We are going to drink some Brauneberger, 1911, and some Red Graves, 1907, and a glass of Tawny Port with the cheese." The guests know that each item in this short menu will be brought to the table in liberal quantities and that they may pass by anything that does not suit them and freely take a second large helping of what they like best.

These frequent references to hostesses and guests may seem out of place in a book about **homely meals**. They apply, however, to purely family life as well as to formal dinners and luncheons. A man who never shaves except when he is going to meet strangers

ought to be poorly thought of by his wife ; and the wife who makes an enormous difference between passing guests and her own family is equally deserving of censure. “ **Feed the Brute** ” is supposed to be merely a jocularly ; but there are too many houses where the ordinary meals must be called feeding-times rather than dinners. This is a sin not only against civilisation but against economy. When the pleasures of the table are concentrated in the single pleasure of sating a good appetite with succulent and toothsome food, the eater naturally eats as much as he can put away. The true pleasures of the table, however, include delights for the eyes and the mind. **Refinement is the enemy of gluttony.** Housekeepers who grudge a few shillings for candlesticks, and a few pence for flowers, must often disburse many times the total of these savings to buy extra ounces of fish and meat and sweet things. Take cheese, for example. At a rough family dinner, the men cut and eat the cheese as one cuts and eats it at a wayside inn after three or four hours of tramping ; but at a delicately served dinner one-fourth the quantity is sufficient.

I must not shirk the question of **Wine**. Speaking for myself, I hate alcoholic excess with all the heat and force of my soul, and I should be glad to see the consumption of ardent spirits cut down to one-twelfth its present volume. At the same time I am convinced that the moderate use of cheap, light, pure wines at luncheon and dinner is desirable in the highest degree. When all is said and done, the everyday cuisine of France is the best in the world, and this cuisine pre-

supposes an accompaniment of simple table wines. In a Yorkshire town I was once invited to the evening meal in the house of a wealthy manufacturer. At one end of the table there was a whole salmon ; at the other, two boiled chickens smothered with white sauce. I have rarely met a finer salmon or more flavoured chickens ; but, instead of well-chilled Chablis or Hock or Moselle, we drank tea and cream with the fish, and, instead of Médoc or St Emilion or Beaujolais with the birds, we drank the second brew of tea and more cream. Later in the evening, the men warded off trouble by helping themselves liberally to whisky-and-soda, while the ladies turned over the pages of a religious weekly and lingered fondly upon an illustrated advertisement of a cure for indigestion. Such habits are very wrong.

Wine is barred in many households through incorrect estimates of the expense. Now it is quite true that wine is much dearer than tea ; and if any reader of this book prefers " high tea " to a civilised dinner, I can only bow my head in wonder and let that reader pass me by. But I have a word to say to those of sounder tastes. Wine is not so very dear after all. I have noticed that where wine is omitted all kinds of little *extra solaces* are forthcoming, and these often cost as much as the wine. By the time one has paid for lime juice and soda, or for ginger ale, and for the sweet biscuits or tiny cakes or chocolates that are produced to atone for the austerity of the beverages, no money has really been saved.

Sound red and white wines from France and Spain and Portugal and Italy and Algiers can be bought at prices ranging upwards from elevenpence a bottle,

A bottle of wine looks dearer than a bottle of beer, but it goes much further. Again, beer is usually gulped more than wine, and is often the ally of practices which lead to indigestion. When a liberal supply of a cheap drink is at his elbow, many a man is tempted to "wash down," as the ugly phrase goes, his food therewith, instead of masticating it thoroughly. As wine is served in smaller and more significant glasses, it is treated more respectfully, while its greater variety of flavours and colours and aromas as compared with those in malt liquors causes wine to be more deliberately and attentively consumed. So I say once more that wine is not so very dear after all.

I do not recommend the strong wines which grocers sell in **screw-stoppered flagons**. These powerful juices are said to have the merit of remaining good for many days after the stopper is first unscrewed ; but their durability is too often attributable to some artificiality, such as fortifying or sterilising. All the same, I must recognise the fact that a bottle, or even half-a-bottle of wine, is **not entirely consumed** at one meal in every household, and I therefore recommend a simple way of getting out of the difficulty. Keep in the house a few clean bottles in half or quarter sizes. When you draw a cork before dinner, fill a half or quarter bottle with the wine which you do not propose to drink that day. Push in a good soft cork and put the surplus wine in a cold place if it be white, or in a warmer spot if it be red. On the morrow, or even some days later, the second portion will be nearly as good as the first. This advice does not apply fully to the more highly bred French and German table wines, but it is true of cheap Burgundy, Claret, Graves, Sauternes and Chablis.

A bottle of some cheap but authentic dessert wine, such as a **Marsala**, at about eighteenpence a bottle, shows full value for the money it costs. A quite small glass of Marsala with the nuts will round off a simple dinner admirably, and this wine is also **useful** in **cookery**. I have referred once or twice, in earlier chapters, to the use I have made of Marsala when improvising tasty dishes out of chance materials.

Rum for omelettes, and **Kirsch** and **Curaçao** and **Maraschino** for macedoines of fruit, have their place in good housekeeping. We should be slow, however, to make much use of **brandy** except for the firing and saucing of the Christmas pudding. I used to know a mischievous matron who invariably included terribly drunken **trifles** and **tipsy cakes** in her menus when teetotallers came to dine. The teetotallers almost always took a large second helping, but, as they were mostly lifelong abstainers, of course they had no means of knowing why the stuff tasted so nice. Still, it was not right to give them a pleasure which they would have refused if they had known its origin. And, as a hostess cannot be sure that there will be no pledged abstainers at her table, she ought not to serve sweets like these. Further, they are not good in themselves. They enable a bad cook to take a short cut to favour, and they often combine badly with the rest of the dinner.

¶ Next to wine, the best table drink is good **Cider**. I do not mean the aerated and sweetened cider, which is one of the most deadly beverages in the world,

but the much cheaper and absolutely natural juice of the apple, well fermented and bottled without the addition of water or sugar or gas.

Good, cold, fresh **water** is a drink which every reader ought to try, if he has not done so already. It pours well out of the rough jugs which the quarrymen of the Isle of Purbeck make in winter, and is worthy of good tumblers or thin glasses. This drink is less popular than it ought to be, largely because one gets it for practically nothing, and very little trouble is taken to serve it in perfection. Added to cheap and undistinguished wine, it goes down well and seems to take the coarseness of the wine away; but it is the enemy of fine wines and must never be mixed with them. As for **ice**, one should be shy of putting it in drinking water. When very cold water is wanted, let the water-jug stand in a pail of ice until it is thoroughly chilled.

Lemonade freshly prepared from fresh lemons and not excessively sweetened is a good drink. So is **barley water**. As for the very cheap large bottles of so-called **mineral waters** which are hawked round the suburbs, it is obvious that they can rarely be satisfactory. **Natural mineral waters** are often good, but rarely so good as the vendors would have us believe, considering that they are almost as dear as cheap wine.

Although many people refuse it at night, because it keeps them awake, good **coffee** should be available

at the end of most dinners and all luncheons. I say good coffee. Although the English amaze French housewives by their open-handedness with butter and cream and prime cuts of meat, they are niggardly in comparison with the French when it is a question of black coffee. For half-a-pint of black coffee it is necessary to use not less than three heaped-up teaspoonfuls of coffee, freshly ground. Several experimental purchases may be necessary before you hit upon the blend that suits you best, but I may say that there is no need to pay a very high price. I think you can do as well for a florin as for half-a-crown, if you will persevere in the search. The blend should be bought in berries. A small coffee-mill and a French coffee-pot are best bought where you buy the coffee itself, and when you go to buy them, you should ask the coffee merchant for the best advice he can give you. Always remember that you ought to use twice as much coffee for the morning coffee as for coffee at luncheon or dinner, because you will dilute the morning coffee with milk ; a little chicory improves *café au lait*.

If you find that you have made too much coffee, you can pour the surplus into a bottle, cork it well, and use it next day ; but do not let anybody persuade you into the false economy of trying to use the coffee-grounds over again.

Frown upon liqueurs.

One more economy. If any muffish and self-indulgent young bachelor has formed the habit of

dropping in to dine with you, do not hesitate to say that you suppose he will soon be coming round to bid you good-bye and that he must be sure to look you up the moment the War is over. In this way you will save money, while Lord Kitchener will gain a creature who may, some day, be turned into a man.

CHAPTER XVI

SOME BOOKS : AND A BOOK

I THINK it was Sir Thomas Browne who said that the man who will do the most with books is the man who would have done the most without them. This is emphatically true of cooks and cookery-books. The men and women who turn cookery-books to the most profitable account are those who would make a fairly good show, simply through their common-sense and carefulness, even if every cookery-book in the world were burnt and scattered to the winds.

I am about to mention a few works on cookery ; but it is to be understood that I do not put forward my short list with any thought of disparaging the scores of excellent manuals which are not named in it. I shall confine myself to half-a-dozen of the books in my own culinary library, which is very small, except on the antiquarian and literary side. Some people are always buying cookery-books, especially such books as are merely written to sell. I find it best to use a few books only, each book expounding the doctrines and practices of **a distinct school**. When I am in doubt, I compare all the recipes for cooking the given materials, from the simplest to the most elaborate. One soon forms the habit of reading recipes as musicians read printed scores. A trained

musician does not need to sit down at the piano, but can inwardly hear the melodies and harmonies and rhythms of a composition which is put into his hands for the first time ; and, similarly, an intelligent and experienced cook can enjoy many a banquet of unfamiliar dishes by simply giving his mind to the printed page.

The cookery-book, or rather the work on cookery, which I prize most is "The Spirit of Cookery," by the late **Dr Thudichum** (London, 1895). This is not a book of recipes, but is a kind of grammar of the art. Unfortunately the learned and laborious author used too copiously terms and phrases which most readers will not easily interpret. Those who have not allowed their early Greek and Latin to fade from their minds will find delight in Dr Thudichum's admirably precise expressions. But everybody has not kept up his classical studies, and I fear that my mention of "The Spirit of Cookery" must be regarded more as a tribute to the memory of an underrated man than as a recommendation of his book to practising cooks.

Passing over a bundle of ill-printed little books which I have bought in small towns abroad, I must name the big tome of **Jules Gouffé** called "Le Livre de Cuisine." The first edition of this work is now nearly fifty years old, and I am therefore glad to possess a revision published early in the twentieth century. Gouffé divides his book into "Cookery for the Household" and "Grand Cookery." He

expects the reader to take the work of the kitchen seriously, and many of his recipes would be useless to the cook who has not thoroughly mastered the first principles. Indeed I cannot advise the ordinary housekeeper to spend money and time on French works of this class, as it is necessary to learn almost a new kind of French—and a very ugly kind—in order to read them with profit. The fat volumes of **Urbain-Dubois** are easier for an Englishwoman to use. One may leave on one side the expensive work, “*La Cuisine Classique*,” but “*La Cuisine d’aujourd’hui*” and “*La Cuisine de tous les Pays*” are well worth having.

About twenty-five years ago a French lady living in England lectured and wrote under the name of “**Cordon Bleu**.” Her book, called “*French Cookery for Ladies*,” is unfortunately composed upon an inconvenient plan, but its practical value is high. The little volume abounds in hints which the more solemn French writers do not give, because they think nobody needs them. “**Cordon Bleu**” perceived that the common kitchen-lore of France was little known in England, and her writings are valuable chiefly because she bridges the gap.

Colonel **Kenney-Herbert**, whose earlier books were sent out under the pseudonym of “**Wyvern**,” began his important contributions to the literature of the kitchen with a book called “*Culinary Jottings for Madras*.” On his return to England he followed up his Anglo-Indian cookery-book by a series of small

publications and finished his work with "Common-sense Cookery for English Households" (London, 1894, and later editions). "Common-sense Cookery" costs six shillings, and I recommend it strongly to the student who is independent enough to pick and choose among its generally excellent contents. In my own little practice I differ, however, from "Wyvern" in one important respect. He attempts to state the proportions of all the ingredients in his recipes with an exactitude which a medical man could hardly surpass in writing a prescription for a dying patient. When he was himself learning to cook, "Wyvern" was often maddened by instructions to "add a little" of this or that, and he made up his mind that his own pages should be free from such tantalising vagueness. Up to a certain point he was right. Whenever it is possible to write a recipe precisely, an author is bound to see that precision is achieved. I have myself, in an earlier chapter, reproached **Sir Henry Thompson** for speaking of "a sufficient quantity of baking powder" in an otherwise exact recipe. [Sir Henry Thompson, whose book I have already commended, was a medical man as well as a surgeon, and he knew that the baking powder which he recommended had a fixed composition.] Speaking broadly, however, it is impossible to set down in cold print the exact weight or measure of every solid or liquid constituent of a dish. Salt, pepper, herbs, vinegar, sugar and nearly all other common ingredients are of widely varying savour, warmth, piquancy, sharpness, sweetness. An ounce of butter and a gill of milk from one dairy will be rarely be found to have just the same richness as equal quantities of the same

products from another. Even common white flour varies considerably in its characteristics. When we come to stocks and sauces we perceive at once that, until such preparations are standardised, it is worse than idle to measure them out like liquid drugs as regulated by the pharmacopœia. Vegetables, eggs, meat, fish are equally variable. One mushroom differs from another mushroom in glory. One cooking apple from the tree in the middle may be worth two apples from the tree on the right or only half-an-apple from the tree on the left. And not only are the materials erratic, but their **carrying power** often varies with the weather, as everybody knows who makes his own mayonnaise.

“Wyvern” gave one reason for his meticulous recipes which I am bound to discuss. He held that cooks must be furnished with exact directions so that they could have no excuse for the unclean practice of **tasting** a mixture and then stirring it with the same spoon. In unison with all my readers, I abhor such a dirty habit and, if I had not been assured by house-keepers that it prevails in many kitchens, I should be disposed to treat it as almost non-existent. There is, however, a remedy much simpler than “Wyvern’s.” Every clean and decent cook keeps at hand a jug or a basin or a large cup that is not easily overturned, and, having filled the vessel with hot water, she places her spoon therein. When the time comes for tasting, she transfers a half-spoonful of soup to a tea-cup, or a dab of sauce to a saucer, or a morsel from a ragout to a small plate. The spoon goes back immediately into the hot water, while the cold cup or plate quickly chills the liquid or solid enough for it

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to be tasted. I maintain that every good cook is bound to taste the larger number of dishes which she prepares, there being few exceptions outside roasts and grills and pastry and puddings.

There is another reason why tasting is necessary in home cookery. Home, Sweet Home, is trying to the temper, and one is often thankful for the truth expressed in the beautiful song which declares that there is no place like it. Still, the Home is better than the Hotel, because its inhabitants can attain in it a closer adjustment of their little fads and weaknesses, and aches and pains. When a French chef in a restaurant kitchen sends upstairs a classical dish, he deserves no great credit for having produced it with hardly any tasting during the act of cooking ; simply because a classical dish is of fixed constitution and the customer who does not feel in the mood for it can choose something else instead. In Home Cookery, however, a good housekeeper bears in mind the peculiarities of those for whom she is providing. There are many people, for instance, who would enjoy certain wholesome sweets if the sweetening were less lavishly introduced than is usual. A little while ago I ordered a **Pouding Soufflé aux Marrons** for a small dinner where only men were present. It looked so much like a **vanilla soufflé** that almost everybody refused it ; but, after an explanation had been made, the men ventured upon tiny portions and were delighted with the result. The pudding had been made with hardly any sweetening and it would have been better still with none at all. This was at home. A week later I gave similar directions at a restaurant and the result was a

failure, because the *entremetier* did not know our palates.

Again, the perfect housekeeper will remember the state of health of her charge or charges. I have in mind the case of a man who has been accustomed for nearly thirty years to eat in restaurants of the first class. After a serious illness he finds himself unable to stomach dishes into which cooked butter enters ; yet he has a detestation of invalid diet and plain cookery. His case is not a rare one and it should not be beyond the skill of a resourceful cook to deal with it. But, in such circumstances, one must begin by breaking away from the exact prescriptions in printed manuals, and must **correct** one's subsequent innovations by **tasting**.

Tasting is not as simple as it sounds. A good cook must learn to rise above her personal likes and dislikes, just as a tea-taster or a wine-taster learns to judge tea or wine for the suiting of palates other than his own. Many a conscientious cook in an English kitchen, who has worked her way up from the position of a scullery-maid, wonders why her best efforts fail to please certain guests. Through her tears she will sometimes protest to the parlourmaid that she " had some of it " herself and that " it was beautiful." The trouble is that she has tested her work by the palate of a woman and of a peasant, making no allowance for enormous differences of physique and education. I am not alluding to the cruder faults, but to the innumerable little touches and fine shades which accumulate into all the difference between good and bad cookery. Where the art of tasting has not been acquired, I prefer the methods of " Wyvern " after all.

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After beginning to write this book, I met with a very fat volume called "Cookery for Every Household," by **Florence B. Jack**. I took a slight dislike to it, as it had the appearance of having been bulked out on artful paper so as to seem marvellous value for three and sixpence. I found, however, that it was an excellent book; indeed it would be difficult to name a more suitable volume for daily use. The recipes are neither extravagant and complicated on the one hand, nor bald and rudimentary on the other.

Space allows of my discussing only two more cookery-books. The first of them is "The Cookery-book of Lady Clark of Tillypronie." **Lady Clark** dispensed and received a great deal of hospitality in her long life, and she made it a rule to possess herself of the recipe for every dish which struck her fancy, either for its novelty or for its excellent rendering of familiar ideas. She filled sixteen books with directions which she had jotted down on envelopes or the backs of menus or any other scraps of paper that were at hand. After Lady Clark's death the recipes were carefully classified and printed in a six-shilling volume which nobody will regret buying. At a first glance, it may seem that the book is even better than it is. One opens it with bright hopes of finding in it the masterpieces of all schools, but one gradually perceives that the tastes of Lady Clark and her husband largely dominated the choice of dishes to be described. Still, it is a book to buy.

The second of my last two books has not yet

been printed. Perhaps it has not even begun to be written. I am thinking of the book which I want every reader of my own wretched little essay to set about compiling. These pages, in spite of their poverty, may at least stir up the disappointed reader to serious studies and experiments in the kitchen. If such should be my too rich reward, I beg each newly fired enthusiast to buy without delay a strongly bound book containing about five hundred blank leaves of good and durable writing-paper, with an alphabetical index at the beginning or the end. And in this book let there be written down, one by one, every worthy recipe which has been successfully applied in the owner's own kitchen. Let notes abound, correcting my gross errors and the little slips of better writers. Let a thousand odds and ends of market and kitchen and pantry and table wisdom be treasured up and written down. Let any notable menu be transcribed into the book, with any quaint domestic happening, or episode of hospitality. And when this young century is old, and the War now raging is no more to our grandchildren than the campaigns of Wellington are to us; when new men and new women have begun to eat new plants and new fruits with our familiar birds and beasts and fishes in new ways; then who can say that the stout book with the five hundred leaves will not be counted more precious than any romance or poem of this generation? So let the tome be bought to-day and let the writing begin to-morrow. This I crave in my vanity; because thus, although I cannot myself write an enduring book on cookery, I may at least have caused one to be written.

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